

**REGIONAL FEARS OF WESTERN  
PRIMACY AND THE FUTURE OF U.S.  
MIDDLE EASTERN BASING POLICY**

**W. Andrew Terrill**

**December 2006**

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Report Documentation Page			Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188		
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE <b>DEC 2006</b>		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED <b>00-12-2006 to 00-12-2006</b>	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE <b>Regional Fears of Western Primacy and the Future of U.S. Middle Eastern Basing Policy</b>			5a. CONTRACT NUMBER		
			5b. GRANT NUMBER		
			5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER		
6. AUTHOR(S)			5d. PROJECT NUMBER		
			5e. TASK NUMBER		
			5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER		
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) <b>Army War College, Strategic Studies Institute, 122 Forbes Avenue, Carlisle, PA, 17013-5244</b>			8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER		
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)			10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)		
			11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)		
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT <b>Approved for public release; distribution unlimited</b>					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT	18. NUMBER OF PAGES <b>113</b>	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT <b>unclassified</b>	b. ABSTRACT <b>unclassified</b>	c. THIS PAGE <b>unclassified</b>			

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A number of friends and colleagues provided useful comments on earlier drafts of this work. I would particularly like to thank Professor Larry Goodson, U.S. Army War College; Professor Steven Metz of the Strategic Studies Institute, U.S. Army War College; Professor Jeffrey Record, U.S. Air War College; and Ms. Sarah Womar. Rear Admiral (ret.) John Sigler, currently of the National Defense University, also provided me with a great deal of helpful insight that was of enormous value in pursuing this effort. An old friend from my own military service, Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Friedenberg rendered tremendous assistance to me during my 2006 visit to Kuwait where he serves as U.S. Defense Attaché. I would also like to thank another friend, Colonel Brian R. Kerins, USAF, for providing valuable support to me on repeated embassy-assisted travel to the United Arab Emirates. I am especially grateful to Commander John J. Arnold and Lieutenant Colonel Christopher J. Beoddy of the U.S. Embassy in Qatar for their help on multiple visits to that country. Most of all, I would like to thank my research assistant, Mary J. Elias, who showed incredible energy and enthusiasm in helping me with this monograph. This work benefited greatly from her resourcefulness and initiative. Naturally, any and all mistakes of fact, opinion, and speculation within this work are entirely my own.

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ISBN 1-58487-265-9

## FOREWORD


The United States has a core national interest in maintaining peace and stability in the Middle East as well as containing or eliminating threats emanating from that region. Yet, if most American strategic analysts can agree on this assumption and these goals, there is often disagreement on the ways to best achieve them. In this monograph, Dr. W. Andrew Terrill presents his analysis of how the United States and other Western states might best address their military cooperation and basing needs within the Middle East, while still respecting and working with an understanding of regional and especially Arab history and concerns. He also provides the reader with policy recommendations based upon his analysis.

This monograph is not intended to be an exhaustive examination of all U.S. basing activities or military cooperation in the Middle East. It also does not include a discussion of Israel, which would be a separate and important study in and of itself. Rather, it is an examination of other Middle Eastern (and especially Arab) views about Western military facilities in their region and foreign soldiers on their soil. Dr. Terrill traces the historical background of Western bases in the Middle East, noting how these facilities often were used by the Western powers to dominate local client states. Such policies of domination were especially conspicuous in the 1940s due to British (and later American) efforts to confront the Nazi menace in that part of the world. These policies, however necessary at the time, were greeted with a predictable backlash in the 1950s by populist Arab nationalists. The U.S. and British military presence in the region declined dramatically in the decades that followed, but the Western military involvement once again became prominent and noticeable in the 1990s, following changes

in regional security arrangements inspired by Saddam Hussein's invasion of Kuwait.

New versions of old concerns about Western forces became prominent in contemporary times, and yet the idea of a Western withdrawal from the region is also of serious concern to a number of Arab leaders. Currently, the United States seeks to help defend its many allies in the region without doing so in a way that inadvertently encourages radicalism in the area or adds to the discomfort level of our regional supporters and allies. Dr. Terrill clearly believes that this can be done, but that such tasks must be approached with delicacy and a reasonable sensitivity to local concerns. States that appear to be treated like client governments inevitably will have to prove to their population and the world that they are not de-facto colonies.

The Strategic Studies Institute is pleased to offer this monograph as a contribution to the national security discourse on this important subject, as our nation continues to grapple with a variety of problems associated with the U.S. presence in the Middle East. This analysis should be especially useful to U.S. military strategic leaders as they seek to address the complicated interplay of issues related to Middle Eastern security in what our local allies would see as a politically acceptable and constructive manner. A more general reading audience also might be struck by the number of solid allies that the United States has in the region and the continuing need to work effectively with these nations and to treat them with the respect that allies clearly deserve.

  
DOUGLAS C. LOVELACE, JR.  
Director  
Strategic Studies Institute

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH OF THE AUTHOR

W. ANDREW TERRILL joined the Strategic Studies Institute (SSI) in October 2001, and is a Middle East specialist. Prior to his appointment, he served as a Middle East nonproliferation analyst for the International Assessments Division of the Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory (LLNL). In 1998-99, Dr. Terrill also served as a Visiting Professor at the U.S. Air War College on assignment from LLNL. He is a former faculty member at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Virginia, and has taught adjunct at a variety of other colleges and universities. He is a retired U.S. Army Reserve lieutenant colonel and Foreign Area Officer (Middle East). Dr. Terrill has published in numerous academic journals on topics including nuclear proliferation, the Iran-Iraq War, Operation DESERT STORM, Middle Eastern chemical weapons, and ballistic missile proliferation, terrorism, and commando operations. Since 1994, at U.S. State Department invitation, Dr. Terrill has participated in the Middle Eastern Arms Control and Regional Security (ACRS) Track 2 talks, which are part of the Middle East Peace Process. He holds a B.A. from California State Polytechnic University and an M.A. from the University of California, Riverside, both in Political Science. Dr. Terrill also holds a Ph.D. in International Relations from Claremont Graduate University, Claremont, California.



## SUMMARY

The Arab World has maintained a long and problematic history with Western military bases on its territory. Until at least the 1940s, imperial powers often maintained that these bases were designed to defend regional nations against foreign invaders, but they also were used to pressure and sometimes control client governments. However necessary and important such pressure might have been during World War II, it was still a series of infringements on sovereignty that formed an important backdrop for Arab views on U.S. basing issues. Nationalist ferment against foreign bases was a key component of Arab politics throughout the 1950s and 1960s. In response to these regional political concerns, as well as changing Western military requirements and economic pressures, the U.S. and British military presence in the Middle East declined steadily, and a number of major Western bases were evacuated. By the early 1970s, the U.S. and British military presence in the area had been scaled down dramatically, and other issues had become more prominent in Arab-American relations.

The 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait introduced a major shock into the Arab system, and Saudi Arabia allowed large numbers of U.S. and other troops to be stationed on its soil as a prelude to the liberation of Kuwait in 1991. Significant numbers of U.S. forces remained in Saudi Arabia for another 12 years following Saddam's 1991 defeat by coalition forces, establishing a new military reality in the region. Additionally, Bahrain and Oman strengthened existing agreements with the United States in the aftermath of Operation DESERT STORM, while Kuwait, the United



Arab Emirates, and Qatar negotiated new security agreements. Nevertheless, in the years following 1991, many of the old concerns about the political meaning of a Western military presence in the region re-emerged. Saudi Arabia, in particular, began to repeat the earlier pattern whereby large and important Arab states often find it embarrassing to rely too publicly on the West for their military security. Additionally, these same states may have difficulty presenting themselves as important voices within the Arab World if they appear to be disproportionately influenced by the West and dependent on it for national security concerns. The United States and Saudi Arabia eventually reached an agreement for the withdrawal of almost all U.S. military forces in 2003, although the two countries remain close, and the United States continues to be a major arms supplier to the Saudis.

A variety of large or strategically placed Arab states, including Egypt and Jordan, maintain close military relations with the United States, although for nationalistic reasons they stop short of allowing permanent bases. The strong exception to the general Arab disapproval of U.S. bases in the Middle East has remained the more welcoming approach of the smaller Arab Gulf states. Some of these nations at times deliberately have sought to attract a U.S. military presence which they viewed as vital to their defense. It is, therefore, useful to continue to nurture current basing arrangements with friendly Arab countries of the Gulf which accept a U.S. presence as vital to their own national security and perhaps their national survival. Such states include Bahrain, Kuwait, Qatar, the United Arab Emirates, and under certain circumstances, Oman. These countries have proven their friendship and their willingness to work with the United States under a variety of circumstances.

It is also important for the United States to continue to maintain strong military links to other significant Arab allies that do not involve permanent bases or even placement of military stocks for future use. Strong military ties with Egypt, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and others are valuable for the security of the region, and can be especially important during times of crisis when these nations can help the United States through their political influence, intelligence sharing, and temporary use of their military facilities. The support of these countries also may be necessary to ensure that other states permitting U.S. basing are not criticized mercilessly or humiliated in front of their publics and the world.

It should be emphasized further that the United States must not place serious hope in the prospect of long-term military bases in Iraq unless there is overwhelming political sentiment within that country favoring these bases. The development of such sentiment appears extremely unlikely. Iraq has a sensitivity about Western domination that is grounded firmly in its historical experience, and this is a history which contemporary Iraqis have not forgotten. Moreover, Iraq is a large and prominent Arab state which seeks a major voice in regional politics. An ongoing U.S. military presence in Iraq could serve to undermine the credibility of the Iraqis in asserting that voice. Any Iraqi government seeking permanent bases would almost certainly hurt itself with its own public.

Finally, despite the strong and important relations that the United States has with a variety of Gulf Arab allies providing basing rights, it would be a mistake to treat these relationships too casually. A constant temptation for a superpower is to assert its own concerns at the expense of its allies, and justify such

actions by the disparity in power. Unfortunately, allies that depend on the United States for their own security can become especially resentful of U.S. actions because their frustration and that of their publics are compounded by that dependency. These frustrations can create problems later that could have been avoided, and every effort must be made to do so. A number of states within the region respond exceptionally well to high level consultation and simply a willingness to listen to their points of view. Many within the Gulf also appreciated the U.S. administration's willingness to stand up for the value of the United Arab Emirates alliance during the Dubai Ports World controversy. All of these states understand the dangers posed by Iran, although they must sometimes go through the motions of showing respect for the Iranian presence in the region. None of these states trust Iran, and while the U.S. approach to regional security may sometimes be a source of aggravation, it is viewed widely as an indispensable presence.

## REGIONAL FEARS OF WESTERN PRIMACY AND THE FUTURE OF U.S. MIDDLE EASTERN BASING POLICY

The British and Americans had failed in all their efforts to persuade Egypt to join some sort of military partnership. Whether described as “mutual defence” or “regional defence,” it had always come down to the same thing – committing Egypt (and other Arab countries if they followed the Egyptian example) to an unequal alliance which would certainly perpetuate the stationing of foreign troops on Egyptian soil and very likely to involve Egypt in a war with [America’s enemies].

Mohamed Heikal, 1987<sup>1</sup>

Iran reacted strongly in 2004 when the eighth edition of the *National Geographic* atlas was released with the term Arabian Gulf in parenthesis beside the more commonly used Persian Gulf. Tehran banned that edition of the atlas, as well as *National Geographic* journalists, until the map for the Gulf region was changed.

*Kuwait Times*, May 4, 2006<sup>2</sup>

I cannot defend Qatar if a big power attacks. We need the U.S. here in Qatar, and the U.S. needs us.

Qatari Foreign Minister  
Sheikh Hamad Bin Jassem al-Thani, 2002<sup>3</sup>

## INTRODUCTION

In August 1945, the United States emerged from World War II as a global superpower with a military presence throughout key strategic areas of the world. Additionally, as a result of this war and the later Cold War, Washington enjoyed a massive global military

presence characterized by large numbers of formal and informal alliances as well as a U.S. presence at numerous bases throughout the world.<sup>4</sup> Some of these bases were developed for long-term use with a huge infrastructure and thousands of troops stationed there. Moreover, the United States emerged from World War II in an occasionally tense but usually close alliance with the United Kingdom, and to a lesser extent France, the two major colonial powers in the Middle East and North Africa.

In the years 1945-91, the dominant U.S. considerations in seeking, establishing, and maintaining overseas basing rights and facilities centered on containing the military and political power of the Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China. A related concern was to guarantee long-term U.S. and Western access to key economic resources and most especially petroleum and other energy resources.<sup>5</sup> The demise of the Soviet Union in December 1991, as well as ongoing U.S. progress in improving relations with both Russia and China, has led to a re-evaluation of the strategic logic of U.S. basing strategy in various parts of the world, including Europe, Asia, and the Middle East. In the aftermath of these events, a variety of policymakers and strategic thinkers began to conclude that changes in the international political system have helped to undercut key strategic rationales for those overseas bases formerly used within the context of Cold War strategy.<sup>6</sup> This shift has created a situation whereby both the United States and the nations providing basing rights to U.S. forces are seeking a new common understanding on a variety of basing issues, including the threats these facilities are meant to oppose and the conditions under which such forces will be used to support military operations against hostile forces.

Under these new conditions, the United States has announced that as many as 70,000 additional troops will be withdrawn from Europe and Asia.<sup>7</sup> Large standing armies in areas of potential Cold War confrontation will be replaced by “expeditionary” forces which will be sent to areas of crisis when this is determined to be necessary. To support the expeditionary forces, smaller bases sometimes described as “lily pads” are considered useful.<sup>8</sup>

The United States remains a superpower with worldwide interests despite global political changes and the movement to reconfigure its military presence abroad. This status is reflected in strong U.S. security concerns in the Middle East and U.S. interest in supporting a number of important allies in the region. These partnerships are closely linked to the emergence and evolution of post-Cold War security issues and threats to the welfare of the regions in question. In the Middle East, and especially the Gulf region, strong U.S. security ties to regional states are influenced heavily by ongoing problems with Iran, the rise of terrorism, and the danger of regionwide instability and political unrest. There is also uncertainty over ways in which post-Saddam Iraq’s political future might have security repercussions for neighboring states. Consequently, a U.S. presence elsewhere in the region will be important in addressing these problems, even in the aftermath of an eventual withdrawal from Iraq. It is, therefore, vital that the United States continues to maintain a presence in the region despite the receding threat from Russia and the as of yet unrealized dangers from any other extra-regional power.

Unfortunately, even in cases of overlapping Western and local interests, basing agreements often can be sensitive issues in the Middle East, and

especially in the Arab World, due to long-standing concerns about potential Western domination of the region. While many Middle Eastern nations need and desire U.S. military support and sometimes even a U.S. presence in their country, there is often a price that Arab governments must pay with their own publics once they provide such facilities to Western nations. To understand some of the sensitivities that exist about U.S. bases in the Middle East, it is important to examine the recent history of the region and the attitudes that have been influenced by past Arab experience with Western forces stationed on their territory. Moreover, the combination of an evolving strategic situation, historical sensitivities, and new regional concerns about U.S. willingness to exercise military power have all led to a situation whereby the United States must be especially thoughtful in considering how and under what conditions to deploy its forces in this region. In order to protect itself and its allies, the United States will need a basing and military presence policy based on a firm understanding of regional politics and historical sensitivities.

## **WESTERN BASES IN THE ARAB WORLD FROM WORLD WAR II UNTIL OPERATION DESERT STORM**

Although the United States clearly did not emerge as a global superpower until after World War II, the war itself was a particularly important era for relations between the Arab World and the West. While many of the Arab states were not formal colonies, they often were controlled through a variety of political devices, including widespread foreign political manipulation and intimidation of local governments.

Treaties between the imperial power and the client states were usually imposed by the outside power and designed to ensure continued Western influence over the local Arab states.<sup>9</sup> The presence of Western forces in a variety of Arab countries helped to ensure that unequal power relationships were enforced strongly. At the conflict's initiation in September 1939, many Arab states were nominally independent but still very much dominated by colonial powers. As the war continued, some Arab leaders impressed by German victories became interested in pressing the limits of their own sovereignty with the more powerful Western states, particularly the United Kingdom. At one point in early 1941, German and Italian forces advanced to within 60 miles of Alexandria, Egypt, casting doubt on British longevity in the region.<sup>10</sup> At least some Arab leaders doubted that it was in their interests to join the United Kingdom in its seemingly inevitable defeat, while others viewed intra-European conflicts as an opportunity for their countries to break free of some of the constraints of foreign control.

World War II was also a time when the British, in particular, were focused heavily on their own national survival and had little patience with Arab sensitivities over sovereignty issues. Hence, any Arab nationalist actions or agitation that were deemed to threaten British war aims were suppressed quickly and harshly to the extent that it was in the United Kingdom's power to do so. Additionally, many British leaders, and particularly Prime Minister Winston Churchill, remained interested in maintaining a strong and vibrant British Empire well into the post-war era. Correspondingly, the United Kingdom appeared to be offering very little to its Arab allies, protectorates, and colonies in the post-War era beyond a return to the pre-war status quo.<sup>11</sup> Moreover,



although the United Kingdom imported most of its oil from the United States during the war, both British and American officials understood the importance of Middle Eastern oil, and both increasingly were interested in assuring their own post-war access to this resource.<sup>12</sup>

In this environment, real and imagined Western intrigue often was viewed as dominating local politics. Iraq, on the eve of World War II, was an important example of a society whose citizens, often correctly, saw a British hand in all major domestic events. Sometimes, however, this concern was extended into unsubstantiated theories such as those surrounding the death of Ghazi Ibn Fiesal, the young second king of Iraq. Ghazi had made radio broadcasts from 1937 until his death in 1939 denouncing French rule in Syria, British-supported Zionist activities in Palestine, and British influence in the Gulf. According to British sources, King Ghazi later died on April 4, 1939, as the result of a high-speed automobile accident that centered on the use of alcohol.<sup>13</sup> Nevertheless, Arab nationalists throughout the country suspected or believed that he was murdered because of his willingness to oppose British interests.<sup>14</sup> Regardless of whether he was murdered or not, Ghazi's death may have been a welcome development for the British, and tended to feed the belief that the British were prepared to do whatever they deemed necessary to keep their puppet leaders in line. The belief that Ghazi was murdered persists among some Arab authors into contemporary times.<sup>15</sup>

Later, in a much less equivocal move, the anti-British, but also nationalist, Iraqi Prime Minister Rashid 'Ali al Kaylani was ousted by British military intervention in April 1941 after a prolonged

constitutional crisis.<sup>16</sup> While not a soldier himself, Rashid 'Ali had been reinstalled in power through a pro-German coup in collaboration with nationalist army officers. The group he represented previously had explored the possibility of obtaining German aid to fight the British. London therefore was provoked deeply by nationalist agitation, threats to its nationals, actions against pro-British Iraqis, and Baghdad's newfound interest in support from Nazi Germany. The British correspondingly chose to address the issue through military intervention. Some of the forces used to defeat Rashid 'Ali and his supporters were airlifted to the British-controlled air base at Habbaniyah, Iraq, while others came from Jordan (then Transjordan), including units from the tough and capable British-led Arab Legion.<sup>17</sup> Iraq remained under occupation until 1945, and London reinstated a pro-British Iraqi leadership prior to the departure of British and Empire troops from Iraq at that time. Thus, in the April 1941 counter coup, the Habbaniyah Air Base was not used to protect Iraq from a foreign enemy but rather to help enable a foreign power to occupy Iraq. Under these circumstances, nationalist resentment was inevitable regardless of how justified British actions may have been in struggling against the Nazi menace.

Elsewhere in the Gulf area, Reza Shah of Iran was dethroned by the British military in August 1941 and deported to South Africa, where he died 3 years later in 1944. Reza Shah had been impressed enormously with European fascism, and was openly friendly to Nazi Germany, thereby sealing his fate so far as the British were concerned. He was succeeded by his 21-year-old son, Mohammed Reza Pahlavi, who was to be Iran's last shah.<sup>18</sup> The son was viewed by the British as a weak and insecure youth who would be intimidated by the example of his father's dethronement. Like

Rashid Ali, the old shah was seen as being too open to German overtures. While Iran is not an Arab country, this display of raw power against a large and nominally independent state nevertheless was viewed with considerable apprehension throughout the Arab World and the wider region.

Another well-known and important example of British primacy over a large and important Middle Eastern state involves Anglo-Egyptian relations. Again, wartime strategy dominated the British strategic outlook as they desperately defended Egypt's Suez Canal from advancing German and Italian forces. At various points in time, the British position in Egypt appeared on the verge of collapsing, and the British were briskly and harshly unsympathetic to any efforts to assert the prerogatives of Egypt's formal independence. On February 4, 1942, British Ambassador to Egypt Sir Miles Lampson (later Lord Killearn) ordered Egyptian King Farouk to dismiss his pro-Axis Prime Minister and appoint an official supportive of British goals.<sup>19</sup> Lampson made his demands while the king's palace was surrounded by British military units, including armored vehicles. The king was given the stark choice of submitting to British demands or being arrested. Farouk, having no dignified alternative, chose the former in a major humiliation for both the king and Egypt.<sup>20</sup> At least one senior Egyptian officer offered his resignation to the king because of the army's failure to defend him, but Farouk declined this offer.<sup>21</sup> He understood that there was little that the Egyptian military could do because of the powerful British military presence within Egypt.

Following the end of World War II, the Western presence in the Middle East appeared less heavy-handed but was still significant and included Western

forces being stationed at regional military bases. The United States also increasingly was interested in military facilities within the Arab World. Earlier, in 1943, Saudi King Abdul Aziz granted U.S. rights to build an air base in Dhahran in eastern Saudi Arabia. In the aftermath of the war, this facility expanded to become an important Strategic Air Command (SAC) asset. Additionally, the U.S. Navy visited the Saudi port of Damman in 1948 and began using port facilities in Bahrain in 1949.<sup>22</sup>

The other major U.S. air base in the Arab World during this time frame was Wheelus Air Base in Libya, a country which became independent under a conservative monarchy in December 1951. Libya concluded a treaty of friendship and alliance with the United Kingdom in 1953, while in 1954 the Libyans agreed to provide the United States with basing rights in exchange for economic aid. Wheelus, near Tripoli, became the centerpiece of this effort and was considered a strategically valuable Cold War base. The facility eventually became one of the largest SAC bases outside of the continental United States. Additionally, the Libyans set aside ranges in the desert to be used by U.S. aircraft on practice bombing runs. These bombing ranges were particularly valuable since Libya's uncluttered airspace, clear weather, and large areas of uninhabited land greatly facilitated training missions.<sup>23</sup> USAF units practiced tactics for both nuclear and non-nuclear attacks at Wheelus.

The Cold War, which began under President Harry Truman, reached a new intensity during President Dwight Eisenhower's administration (1953-60). In this increasingly vitriolic conflict, U.S. Secretary of State John Foster Dulles asserted that neutralism was immoral in the fight against international communism

and that any decent state would follow the U.S. lead in its efforts to fight this menace.<sup>24</sup> This outlook is seen to echo in contemporary American arguments on international terrorism that “you are either with us or against us.”<sup>25</sup> Nevertheless, even during the Cold War, such arguments often were received poorly by various Arab publics more concerned about ending the vestiges of colonialism rather than becoming part of an international confrontation between the United States and the communist powers. Many Arabs believed that Arab and Western interests diverged significantly on issues involving Israel, oil, arms sales to the region, and foreign relations, among other concerns. If Arab states remained under Western domination, then, according to this logic, Arab interests would be ignored in favor of often conflicting Western interests. Additionally, the 1950s often were seen as something of a heyday for an interventionist Central Intelligence Agency, with an August 1953 intervention to restore Iranian Shah Mohammed Reza Pahlavi to power as a centerpiece of this effort.<sup>26</sup> Iran’s proximity to the Arab World made this intervention a vivid example to a number of Arab states. A more overt demonstration of U.S. power came in 1958 when U.S. Marines invaded Lebanon and became briefly involved in internal Lebanese politics under the Eisenhower Doctrine.<sup>27</sup> This doctrine stated the United States had the right to intervene in any country threatened by international communism. The suggestion that Lebanon was threatened in such a way was, nevertheless, a significant stretch.<sup>28</sup>

The 1950s also saw the rise of strong Arab nationalist leaders, the most important of whom was President Gamal Abdul Nasser of Egypt (1918-70). Until Nasser, many, if not most, Arabs remained uncertain that one of their own leaders could challenge the West openly

on important issues and remain in power. Yet, Nasser confronted the West on a variety of levels, gaining enormous popularity in the process. He emerged as an early advocate of neutralism or nonalignment and became one of the towering figures associated with that movement.<sup>29</sup> A central component of that ideology was to deny the former colonial powers basing rights in nonaligned countries under all but the most exceptional circumstances. Moreover, the Egyptian president moved rapidly to implement his approach by negotiating an October 1954 agreement for the evacuation of British troops from the Suez Canal zone, where such forces had been stationed since 1882.<sup>30</sup> President Nasser's daughter, Dr. Huda Abdel Nasser, later stated that her father was "opposed to alliances between strong and weak countries because they inevitably led to the strong country taking advantage of the situation and imposing its own agenda on the weak country."<sup>31</sup>

President Nasser's version of Arab neutrality had tangible implications for U.S. strategy in the Middle East. In one particularly notable dispute, the Egyptians emerged as the central Arab opponent to the U.S.-supported 1955 military alliance popularly known as the Baghdad Pact (and later referred to as the Central Treaty Organization [CENTO]). Cairo's "Voice of the Arabs" radio described the U.S.-favored Western alliance as colonialism in disguise and harshly denounced the regional countries that were willing to join the Baghdad Pact.<sup>32</sup> This alliance included the United Kingdom, Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Pakistan, with the United States as an "associate member."<sup>33</sup> Despite its limited status with the organization, the United States viewed the alliance as a useful vehicle for containing communism, while Arab nationalists often considered

it to be a way of helping to secure Western domination of the Middle East.<sup>34</sup> Jordan's King Hussein actually signed the Baghdad Pact as a way of securing additional Anglo-American military aid, but the December 1955 anti-Pact rioting was so severe in that country that efforts to actually work within the organization had to be postponed indefinitely.<sup>35</sup> Partially out of fear of Egypt, Saudi Arabia also refused to consider joining the Baghdad Pact and falsely denied the existence of U.S. military facilities in Dhahran (which was now one of the largest air bases in the world).<sup>36</sup> These reactions suggested that Cairo had now proven that it had the ability to thwart at least some Western priorities for regional basing rights.<sup>37</sup>

President Nasser's most important test and the event that helped catapult him to the position of a pan-Arab hero was the 1956 Arab-Israeli war, known in Egypt as the "Tripartite Aggression." British and French leaders, in collusion with Israel, undertook military intervention against Egypt to overthrow President Nasser, after he announced the nationalization of the Suez Canal.<sup>38</sup> The Eisenhower administration chose to oppose the Anglo-French-Israeli effort, which then floundered partially as a result of the lack of U.S. political and especially economic support, as well as strong domestic opposition within the United Kingdom.<sup>39</sup> Nasser was able to remain in power as an Arab nationalist leader who had successfully defied both Israel and two former colonial powers. The 1956 Suez War often is seen as a key point at which the United States displaced the old colonial powers of Britain and France as the major external power influencing the region.

A second important benchmark for the decline of British power in the region is the destruction of the pro-British Hashemite monarchy of Iraq in a 1958

military coup and its replacement by a series of often radical Arab nationalist governments. In addition to its problems with the Baghdad Pact, the Iraqi monarchy was viewed widely as corrupt, and its destruction evoked little sorrow from the Iraqi masses at the time. It also was viewed often as harshly repressive, although that government's authoritarian practices were only the most pale shadow of those to be undertaken by the totalitarian regimes to emerge later in Baghdad. Underscoring the monarchy's lack of legitimacy, no Iraqi army units rose to its defense as it faced military overthrow.<sup>40</sup> After the 1958 military coup, the British were evicted peacefully from the Habbaniyah Air Base and its associated strategic radar installations.<sup>41</sup> Iraq also immediately stopped sending representatives to Baghdad Pact meetings and formally withdrew from the treaty in 1959. This removal of the British military presence from Iraq, 17 years after the Rashid 'Ali coup, had enormous nationalist significance and was deeply popular in Iraq. Huge crowds filled the streets, shouting enthusiastic slogans supporting the revolution, condemning the old regime, and displaying anti-British emotions that have been described by two leading Iraq scholars as "almost uncontrollable."<sup>42</sup> For a brief time, the Iraqi coup leader and later head of state, Brigadier Abdul Karim Qasim, emerged as a political rival to Nasser for Arab leadership.<sup>43</sup>

Western military bases in the Arab World continued to be an important issue throughout the 1960s and the 1970s, although such concerns often were displaced by the larger issue of U.S. differences with the Arab World over U.S. support for Israel. Such concerns also were mitigated by the ongoing process of Western withdrawal from regional bases in the face of nationalist opposition and other concerns. The



Saudis continued to show exceptional sensitivity over the U.S. Air Force use of the Dhahran Air Base and made it clear that they did not wish to renew the lease when it came up in 1962. The President John Kennedy administration correspondingly evacuated U.S. forces from the facility at that time.<sup>44</sup> This change was not a major problem for U.S.-Saudi relations since the United States increasingly was interested in intercontinental ballistic missiles and bombers, rather than regional air bases, serving as the backbone of SAC. Dhahran's value as a SAC base had been declining correspondingly for years. The Saudi unease over Dhahran throughout this period nevertheless was an important indicator of the sensitivity of the issue of U.S. military forces on Arab soil.

In an interesting blend of the basing issue and the Arab-Israeli conflict, U.S. forces felt compelled to give Libyan officials a comprehensive tour of the Wheelus Air Base in June 1967 to reassure the Arab World that this facility was not being used by U.S. forces for combat missions against Egypt and in support of Israel during the Six-Day War.<sup>45</sup> President Nasser had claimed that U.S. and British forces were flying such missions as part of the overall war effort on the Israeli side. The claim, which was later retracted, was made in the hope of justifying the unfolding Arab defeat and gaining stronger Soviet assistance for the Egyptians. This linkage of Western basing with problems with Israel seems to have illustrated the depth of ongoing suspicions that such facilities might not always be utilized to support Arab interests.

Later, in September 1969, the United States evacuated Wheelus Air Base after a then young Muhammad Qadhafi took power by ousting the elderly pro-Western King Idris. This evacuation was a key demand of the

new Libyan nationalist regime, which had taken its inspiration from President Nasser.<sup>46</sup> This demand was facilitated by the expiration of the U.S.-Libyan basing agreement in 1970, and the unwillingness of the new regime to even discuss the possibility of extending it. The last U.S. military forces left Wheelus on June 11, 1970, a date that was later celebrated in Libya as a national holiday.<sup>47</sup> Egypt naturally approved of the Libyan decision, but the Egyptians, nevertheless, had to make an exception to their own concerns about neutrality by improving their military ties with the Soviet Union in the aftermath of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War in order to prepare for renewed military conflict with Israel. In December 1969, the Soviets controlled six Egyptian airfields and had up to 20,000 military personnel in Egypt.<sup>48</sup> Later, as a result of serious political difficulties and a desire for diplomatic flexibility, Soviet personnel were expelled by Nasser's successor, President Anwar Sadat, in the summer of 1972.<sup>49</sup>

The British also were engaged in a process of withdrawal from many of their Middle Eastern bases in the time frame between 1967 and 1971. The decision to withdraw British forces was based heavily on financial considerations and by the strategic implications of Indian independence in 1949. While Gulf oil remained an important consideration for the British, its protection did not seem to require a large ongoing British military commitment. Additionally, the United Kingdom expected to continue business ties with the newly independent governments of the Gulf in such states as Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates. All of these states became independent in 1971. Another state that became independent as a result of the British military withdrawal from areas east of Suez was the People's Republic of South Yemen. In

1967 British troops withdrew from this former colony and protectorate and gave up the large and important British naval base at Aden.<sup>50</sup>

The 1978-79 Iranian revolution eliminated an important U.S. non-Arab ally that provided key intelligence facilities to the United States.<sup>51</sup> The ouster of the shah also replaced a friendly monarch with an angry Islamic regime whose leaders bore a special grudge with the United States due to previous U.S. support of the Iranian monarchy. This unfortunate development was complicated further by the initial Iranian interest in exporting its revolution to other states in the region.<sup>52</sup> Moreover, the Iranians tended to ridicule U.S. allies in the region as unfit for leadership and supporting what they contemptuously described as "American Islam." In response to a variety of world events, including the fall of the Iranian monarchy and especially the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan, President Jimmy Carter enunciated the "Carter Doctrine" in 1979.<sup>53</sup> In presenting this doctrine to the public, President Carter stated, "An attempt by any outside force to gain control of the Persian Gulf region will be regarded as an assault on the vital interests of the United States of America, and such an assault will be repelled by any means necessary, including military force."<sup>54</sup> When President Carter made these statements, the United States was importing approximately 43 percent of its annual requirement for oil, and the U.S. military presence in the Persian Gulf was centered on a limited number of ships and naval personnel stationed in Bahrain.<sup>55</sup>

Surprisingly, the Carter doctrine did not lead to a sweeping expansion of U.S. forces in the Gulf region, despite the President's decision to place it under U.S. military protection. Instead, Carter sought to help

defend the area in nonintrusive ways with the formation of the Rapid Deployment Joint Task Force (RDJTF) which was to become U.S. Central Command (CENTCOM) in 1983.<sup>56</sup> American diplomats also negotiated new access agreements to facilities in Kenya, Somalia, and the British-controlled island of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean.<sup>57</sup> The only Gulf country from which they obtained a new access agreement was Oman.<sup>58</sup> Even by the late 1980s, the U.S. military presence in the Middle East clearly was limited. A handful of U.S. naval warships were stationed at Bahrain, with occasional port visits conducted elsewhere in the region.

The large and important Bright Star exercises, hosted by Egypt, also began in 1981, and have continued to serve as a cornerstone of U.S. regional security policy.<sup>59</sup> Elsewhere, military protection for Saudi Arabia was expected to involve primarily “over the horizon” (OTH) support due to the Kingdom’s special sensitivity about Western troops and bases on its soil.<sup>60</sup> Also in the Gulf, Oman maintained discreet intelligence and security relations with the United States and United Kingdom partially due to fears about revolutionary Iran.<sup>61</sup> Most of the other Gulf militaries were small and linked to the British. The Jordanian military also provided support and training to a variety of Gulf states.<sup>62</sup> Kuwait in the late 1980s was overtly neutralist, deeply pro-Palestinian, and had no interest in hosting U.S. or other foreign forces on local bases.<sup>63</sup> The Kuwaitis instead chose to negotiate a defense agreement that depended on British military assistance sent to them from elsewhere in the region should they be attacked. The British defense agreement with Kuwait expired in May 1971, leaving that country with no foreign bases on its soil and no formal external protector.<sup>64</sup> Kuwaitis eventually would pay a horrendous price for failing

to address this situation when Saddam Hussein seized the country in 1990, claiming the independent existence of that country was a vestige of imperialism.

## **THE IMPACT OF OPERATION DESERT STORM, THE FALL OF THE SOVIET UNION, AND THE CONTAINMENT OF IRAQ**

The August 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait fundamentally changed the military relationship between the United States and the Arab World, and led to new types of cooperation between the United States and a variety of Saddam's Arab neighbors. According to journalist Bob Woodward, the Saudis were shown U.S. satellite imagery in the aftermath of the Kuwait invasion, indicating that Iraqi forces appeared to have been deployed for a possible military assault against the oil-rich Eastern Province of Saudi Arabia.<sup>65</sup> While Saddam's willingness to follow one reckless action with another is uncertain, the Saudis may, nevertheless, have been deeply concerned about the danger of an Iraqi-dominated Gulf region.<sup>66</sup> They also had a keen sense of their own vulnerability. The Saudi capital of Riyadh is only 275 miles from the Kuwaiti border, and this distance could have been traversed in 3 days by properly supported mechanized and armored forces. Furthermore, the only ground force between Saddam and the Saudi oil fields of the Eastern Province was a battalion of the Saudi Arabian National Guard (SANG) which was comprised of only around 750 troops.<sup>67</sup> Although this force would have been supported by the modern and well-equipped Royal Saudi Arabian Air Force, they had no chance of stopping a determined Iraqi attack without foreign military support. These concerns led to the Saudi decision to reverse previous

policies and allow U.S. and other anti-Saddam coalition forces to be stationed in Saudi Arabia.<sup>68</sup>

The political problems associated with the deployment of Western forces in Saudi Arabia were eased by the participation of a number of Arab states in the U.S.-led anti-Iraqi coalition. Two of these states, Egypt and Syria, even sent substantial numbers of troops to participate in Operations DESERT SHIELD and DESERT STORM, although both countries played only limited roles in the subsequent liberation of Kuwait.<sup>69</sup> Other Arab states publicly offered their military and logistical facilities to support coalition operations. Sultan Qabus of Oman stated that "Friends will not stand with hands tied behind them," indicating that the United States and its partners were welcome to use Omani facilities to resist Saddam in this time of crisis.<sup>70</sup> Support for U.S. actions, nevertheless, were not universal in the Arab World. Jordan did not participate in the anti-Iraq coalition, and the Palestinian Liberation Organization under Yassir Arafat eventually chose to support Saddam politically after ineffective efforts to find an "Arab solution" to the crisis.<sup>71</sup> Libya's Muhammad Qadhafi, who has maintained a history of poor relations with the Saudis, also opposed the deployment of U.S. troops in the region and made angry speeches criticizing the Saudi Arabian king for permitting the American military to use his territory, despite the Iraqi threat to that country.<sup>72</sup> Saddam responded to this Arab division by seeking to portray himself as an Arab nationalist leader under siege from the West and Western stooges, but he clearly was having only limited success in getting his message across.<sup>73</sup>

The United States and its allies administered an overwhelming defeat to Iraq in early 1991, which was

so devastating that many within the U.S. administration expected it to lead to the fall of the Saddam Hussein regime. According to a variety of sources, including former National Security Advisor Brent Scowcroft and former Defense Secretary (later Vice President) Richard Cheney, the U.S. administration expected that the humiliation of such a massive defeat in a short period of time probably would lead to a military coup against Saddam.<sup>74</sup> Moreover, any potential coup plotters were given strong indications that almost any Iraqi government resulting from such action reasonably could request much more liberal surrender terms than would have ever have been given to Saddam Hussein.<sup>75</sup> Such terms could include Iraqi requests for the lifting of United Nations (UN) sanctions and relief or forgiveness from reparations to be paid to Kuwait. Iraqi coup leaders taking power from Saddam could, in most cases, credibly claim that they had no power to dissuade Saddam from invading Kuwait, and that therefore there was no justification for sanctions against a post-war Iraq without Saddam. With the idea of a coup in mind, President George H. W. Bush called upon the Iraqi population to overthrow the dictator.

Unexpectedly, instead of a military coup, Iraq experienced anti-regime popular uprisings originating in the Kurdish and Shi'ite areas. Furthermore, to the surprise of many American observers, the Saddam regime managed to survive the crisis presented by these attacks and by the humiliation of its massive defeat. In part, this development occurred because Saddam still managed to draw enough support from Iraq's Sunni Arab community to keep the government and the military functioning despite the serious uprisings in the northern and southern parts of the country. In particular, the Sunni-dominated military held together

with no defections of company-sized units or larger to the rebels.<sup>76</sup> In the face of hostile Kurdish and Shi'ite Arab uprisings, Iraq's Sunni Arabs may have feared a national reckoning that would extend far beyond Saddam and his immediate circle. The decision by many Sunni Arabs to support Saddam rather than align with Shi'ites and Kurds seeking to overthrow or undermine his regime may have been an interesting harbinger of future Iraqi sectarian problems. Many Sunnis clearly were indicating in 1991 that they would rather live under Saddam than risk the possible consequences of a Shi'ite-dominated government.

Saddam's ability to remain in power for 12 more years after the 1991 war, while a tragedy for the Iraqi people, did have an unexpected side benefit for the United States. After the war, Saddam's government was viewed internationally as a criminal regime that needed to be the subject of continued international scrutiny for its military and especially weapons of mass destruction (WMD)-related activities. Intrusive UN-sponsored inspections for WMD programs continued for years in an effort to find and eliminate every last vestige of Saddam's nuclear, biological, and chemical weapons programs. Such inspection efforts continued until 1998 when Saddam ordered UN inspectors to leave his country. This order was followed by Operation DESERT FOX, a 4-day U.S. and British bombing campaign against Iraq's remaining WMD suspect sites. While conflicting accounts of the effectiveness of the Operation DESERT FOX raids existed at the time they were conducted, it is now clear that Western and UN policies followed by the air strikes effectively ended the Iraqi WMD program.<sup>77</sup> If an Iraqi coup had taken place in 1991 as planned, it is doubtful that a post-Saddam military government would have faced the



same rigorous international scrutiny should it had elected to move forward on these programs.

The survival of the Saddam Hussein regime also had other implications that were more complex. The basing of U.S. troops in Saudi Arabia continued after 1991 as a result of the remaining Iraqi threat and the U.S. presence there became a significant and ongoing source of friction between the United States and Saudi Arabia in the years following Operation DESERT STORM. Some of the concerns related specifically to a Western presence in the country of Islam's two most holy mosques. The Saudi government also was criticized by some of its own citizens for being unable to provide for its own security after decades of massive arms purchases from the West.<sup>78</sup> What had initially appeared as a short-term U.S. presence to deal with a specific threat now evolved into an increasingly controversial open-ended decision to retain at least some U.S. troops indefinitely. Kuwait, on the other hand, welcomed an ongoing U.S. military presence following the war, and the other small Gulf states of Bahrain, Qatar, and the United Arab Emirates moved to establish their own close military relations with the United States shortly thereafter. These small states were under no illusions about their own vulnerability and, unlike Saudi Arabia, felt no embarrassment about their interest in Western military protection.

Additionally, the Saudi government often was viewed throughout the region as closely associated with U.S. policy in Iraq since a no-fly zone over the southern portion of the country was maintained from Saudi and Kuwaiti air bases.<sup>79</sup> The UN sanctions imposed on Iraq eventually were to become deeply unpopular throughout the Arab World, and sanctions and no-fly zones often appeared to the Arab public as two

sides of the same coin.<sup>80</sup> This problem was aggravated sometimes by various U.S. policy statements on sanctions, which many Arabs viewed as excessive and vindictive. When, in May 1996, for example, Secretary of State Madeleine Albright was asked if the human toll of the sanctions was an acceptable price to pay for containing Saddam, she answered, "I think this is a very hard choice. But the price--we think the price is worth it."<sup>81</sup> This remark was viewed widely as disregarding the suffering of innocent Iraqis.<sup>82</sup>

While the Iraqi threat brought the United States and Saudi Arabia together in 1990-91, another unifying external threat, the Soviet Union, crumbled during that same time frame. This potential adversary had been viewed as a mortal danger by the both countries and correspondingly generated U.S.-Saudi cooperation throughout the Cold War years. At least some Saudis, including King Feisal (d. 1975), believed in a bizarre theory of Zionist-Communist cooperation and thereby managed to merge what they viewed as a Soviet and an Israeli threat.<sup>83</sup> Additionally, Saudi Arabia was involved deeply in the anti-Soviet jihad in Afghanistan and cooperated closely with Western security services in coordinating anti-Soviet activities.<sup>84</sup> Anti-communism was an important motivation for cooperation between Saudi Arabia and the United States and helped each country set aside some of their differences. The collapse of the Soviet Union meant that the common threats binding the United States and Saudi Arabia had faded to a crippled Iraq and an Iran with severely limited power projection capabilities for conventional warfare across the Gulf.

## **THE AFTERMATH OF THE SEPTEMBER 11, 2001 ATTACKS**

The September 11, 2001 (9/11) terrorist attacks against U.S. targets served as another major turning point for the ways in which the United States conducted its foreign policy, especially in the Middle East. In the aftermath of the attacks, the United States emerged as an aroused and angry superpower responding to vicious and unprovoked strikes against its civilian population. American anger over 9/11 was viewed widely as justified or at least comprehensible throughout the world. Moreover, remarks by President Bush indicating that countries worldwide had to choose between the United States and the terrorists underscored the depth of the American anger. Under these circumstances, a variety of Arab and Muslim nations felt that they had to be especially attentive to U.S. requests for basing rights and other concessions since they did not wish to be viewed by the United States as insufficiently concerned about terrorism.

As the United States prepared to respond to the 9/11 strikes, it moved to reinvigorate its relationships with a number of allies and establish new military relations with a variety of other nations in strategic locations. The government of Pakistan which had helped to establish the Taliban regime in Afghanistan now abandoned its Afghan ally and moved rapidly to side with the United States as it prepared for its upcoming war in Afghanistan. Pakistani military facilities including air bases correspondingly were made available for U.S. use.<sup>85</sup> Moreover, the United States also obtained basing rights in the former Soviet republics of Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Tajikistan. The U.S. Secretary of Defense called the Central Asian

facilities “operating bases,” rather than permanent bases, since they were to be used to deal with a specific enemy who the U.S. leadership felt could be destroyed quickly. These bases included the large and important Karshi-Khanabad Air Base in Uzbekistan, where the United States remained until receiving a shutdown order from the Uzbek government in July 2005, following a severe souring of relations with the United States.<sup>86</sup> In Kyrgyzstan, the United States also negotiated an agreement for the use of Ganci Air Base in late 2001.<sup>87</sup> This facility was co-located with Manas Air Field on the outskirts of the capital, Bishkek. Ganci Air Base remains in use by U.S. forces supporting ongoing operations in Afghanistan.<sup>88</sup> Kyrgyzstan later sought to raise the rent on this base dramatically, but then backed away from provoking a bilateral breach with the United States.<sup>89</sup> Throughout the Afghan war, U.S. forces have used Tajikistan bases only for emergency landings and occasional refueling.<sup>90</sup> After the war, the United States established bases in Afghanistan itself. The Afghans appear to have mixed feelings about permanent use of these facilities. President Karzai has stated that he favors a long-term “strategic relationship” with the United States and seems open to a permanent military presence in that country.<sup>91</sup> Public opinion, however, seems uncertain on the issue, with key media outlets expressing reservations on the idea. Occasional anti-American riots also underscore the potentially volatile nature of the U.S. presence in Afghanistan.<sup>92</sup>

Problems with the U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia also became more troublesome during this time frame. Former Central Command Commander General Tommy Franks in his 2004 book, *An American Soldier*, described the relationship between the United States and Saudi Arabia as highly charged and stated

that “cultural friction remained a way of life” despite the fact that most U.S. military personnel in Saudi Arabia have been stationed in remote areas such as Prince Sultan Air Base in the desert south of Riyadh. General Franks contrasted U.S. military difficulties with the Saudis with the smooth military relations that he noted between the U.S. military and the smaller Arabian Gulf states “whose friendship with the United States was based on mutual respect.”<sup>93</sup> Nevertheless, Saudi Arabia was willing to support the U.S. military operations in Afghanistan while seeking to conceal that it was doing so. During the 2001-02 Afghanistan War, the Saudis provided operational facilities for U.S. Special Operations forces at Arar, refueling facilities, cheap fuel, and overflight rights.<sup>94</sup>

## **THE 2003 INVASION OF IRAQ AND THE UNCERTAINTIES OF POST-SADDAM IRAQ**

Planning for the 2003 invasion of Iraq led to several problems related to U.S. bases in the Middle East. Both Saudi Arabia and Turkey had major facilities which Pentagon planners hoped, and perhaps expected, to be made available to help implement U.S. plans for regime change in Iraq. Additionally, Kuwait was viewed as a vital staging point for U.S. and coalition ground forces planning to attack northward. Qatar and the United Arab Emirates, as well as various Central Asian bases, also were important to support a variety of air missions against Iraq.

Turkey was key to the creation of a northern front which could be used to confuse Saddam about the direction of the main invasion effort, as well as safeguard northern Iraqi oil fields. The U.S. plan was to have ground forces from the 4th Infantry Division

strike from Turkish territory while supported by significant airpower from Turkish air bases, including the important air base at Incirlik, approximately 250 miles southeast of Ankara. Nevertheless, the prospect of a U.S.-led war against Iraq in early 2003 was deeply unpopular with the Turkish public. Many Turkish parliamentarians regarded the plan to attack Iraq as unjustified, and the Turkish Parliament narrowly refused approval of Pentagon requests to allow the 4th Infantry Division to enter Iraq from Turkey. The Turks did, however, grant U.S. Air Force jets the right to refuel in their country on their way to Iraq.<sup>95</sup> The Turkish example is interesting because U.S. policymakers strongly believed that they eventually would be able to strike a deal with the Turks for the use of their facilities in the planned ground invasion of Iraq.<sup>96</sup> That they ultimately were unable to do so was a source of considerable frustration to many within the U.S. leadership. The incident reveals the danger that even the closest of friends may choose to withhold support in some situations, and no country should be taken for granted. One author also suggests that the Turks should never have been presented with such a sensitive request, since the possibility of a mechanized division and its attendant supply units being emplaced in Turkey and then readied to attack Iraq is something that could not be done in a low profile manner that respected Turkish public opinion.<sup>97</sup>

On the eve of the 2003 war, there was a substantial U.S. Air Force presence in Saudi Arabia, and the United States was clearly interested in using Saudi facilities in the upcoming conflict. U.S.-Saudi disagreements about the wisdom of invading Iraq were, however, serious and based on a fundamental clash of visions for the Middle East. While U.S. leadership viewed

Saddam Hussein as an ongoing danger, many Saudis considered him much more of a spent force that had lost most of his capacity to threaten them.<sup>98</sup> Moreover, Riyadh was never fully comfortable with the concept of regime change in Iraq. Saddam, as a politically isolated Sunni strongman, was far from the worst possible outcome for the Saudis. If U.S. plans for a new Iraq failed, Riyadh faced the possibility of a militant Shi'ite regime on their northern border, or even an Iraqi civil war with dangerous spillover potential.<sup>99</sup> Perhaps even more threatening was the prospect of an American success in Iraq that placed a democratic government in Baghdad. Such a government would serve as a rival seeking influence in Washington and perhaps even cause Saudi citizens to view their monarchy as less attractive than the democratic alternative. Nevertheless, Western press sources maintain that the Saudis eventually allowed the United States to use Prince Sultan Air Base and at least two other facilities in the war with Iraq.<sup>100</sup> The Saudis also are reported to have made the Combined Aerospace Operations Center (CAOC) at Prince Sultan Air Base available for U.S. use in supporting the war.<sup>101</sup>

In March 2003, U.S.-led forces attacked Iraq with the intention of overthrowing the regime of Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and replacing it with a new and democratic system. As expected, Iraq's conventional military forces were defeated rapidly by overwhelming U.S. firepower. The United States, however, was not able to implement plans for a rapid withdrawal of the majority of its forces once Saddam had been ousted. Instead, civil disorder and an emerging insurgency necessitated a continuing large-scale U.S. presence in that country. This presence was resented widely throughout the Arab World and harshly criticized in the

Arab press in the immediate aftermath of the invasion. In this environment, it has become a cliché to suggest that virtually all Arab states passionately opposed the invasion of Iraq, but could not manage to dissuade the United States from undertaking this operation. Such statements are, nevertheless, overgeneralizations since some Arab states quietly supported the U.S. decision to invade Iraq, as will be documented later in this monograph. During the period of the Iran-Iraq War, Saddam often was seen throughout the region as a strong Arab nationalist and a defender of Arab interests, and his support of the Palestinians also was widely viewed as positive. Since his defeat in 1991, however, Saddam had lost a great deal of his previous luster as an Arab nationalist leader.<sup>102</sup>

The overwhelming hostility of the Arab masses to U.S. intervention in Iraq, despite the hatred of many of these same people for Saddam Hussein, is puzzling for many Americans.<sup>103</sup> Yet, many Arabs believe that there are rational and indeed compelling reasons for Arab enemies of Saddam Hussein to regret the invasion of Iraq. The 2003 Iraq war initially was viewed by some in the Arab World as the beginning of a new approach to foreign policy involving U.S. preemptive strikes carried forward without broad international backing. The Iraq war was the first example of the new doctrine sometimes referred to as a “strategy of preemption.” This strategy was seen as being applicable to more than a single regime, and there was widespread uncertainty about whether the United States was planning additional wars after the Iraq intervention. Elites and media professionals throughout the Arab World also expressed uncertainty that the United States would be satisfied with simply defeating the Saddam Hussein regime or was instead motivated by a larger agenda, especially when prominent neoconservatives, outside



of government, spoke of additional candidates for "regime change" and such things as "the establishment of some kind of American protectorate over the oil fields of Saudi Arabia."<sup>104</sup> As time went on, however, these Arab concerns at least were assuaged partially by a belief that problems in Iraq have undercut the appeal of military intervention as a response to other problems with various regimes in the region.

In addition to concerns about the future of U.S. policy, regional states also must address the implications of U.S.-initiated changes that already have occurred. However controversial or subject to differing Western and regional analysis, the ouster of the Saddam Hussein regime fundamentally altered the nature of Gulf security requirements. The residual dangers posed by Iraqi conventional military forces to their neighbors now had evaporated for the indefinite future. The United States would no longer be required to rush troops to Kuwait in response to Iraq saber-rattling such as had occurred in October 1994 when Saddam had moved a two-division force toward the Kuwaiti border with the apparent aim of undermining the sanctions regime which had been directed at Iraq.<sup>105</sup> While this effort was unsuccessful in achieving Saddam's goals, it did illustrate that Saddam could still cause at least a limited amount of trouble, and his continued presence in power could cause periodic problems. Even so, in the aftermath of Saddam's removal from power, new dangers were quick to emerge as Iraq faced the problems of insurgency, terrorism, and escalating sectarian violence and ethnic strife. All of these problems can have potential spillover effects for neighboring states.

Adding to these problems, the citizens of post-Saddam Iraq were quick to show many of the

sensitivities about Western domination that had characterized earlier Iraqi history. According to long time Iraq-based journalist Anthony Shadid, the rhetoric of a democratic Middle East, guided by a benevolent United States, often is “reminiscent of century-old colonialism to a Third World audience.”<sup>106</sup> No foreign power ever entered the Arab World by claiming that it had come to exploit it. All colonial powers have a rich fabric of rhetoric suggesting that they are there to support the hopes and aspirations of the indigenous people. Some Western leaders such as British General Sir Stanley Maude, who led an expeditionary force into what is now Iraq in 1917, have used the term “liberation,” and contemporary Iraqis remain deeply familiar with their own history on these issues.<sup>107</sup> Moreover, anti-American political agitation sometimes has boosted the domestic approval ratings of radical Iraqi leaders such as Shi’ite cleric Muqtada al-Sadr. Sadr experienced a brief but notable rise in his popularity among Iraqis as a direct result of clashes between his forces and the U.S. military in 2004.<sup>108</sup> These concerns about the United States appear to have declined later in the occupation when sectarianism threatened to grow to unmanageable proportions. With thousands of people dying each month in sectarian violence, many Iraqis were much more willing to support any forces of order.<sup>109</sup> Additionally, some Sunnis appeared to be hedging their bets by supporting the insurgents while seeking a continued U.S. presence in Iraq.

The wider Arab World also evinced considerable displeasure over the U.S. presence in Iraq in the immediate aftermath of the invasion. The two major issues identified in a series of public opinion polls as dividing the United States and the Arab World are Israel/Palestine and the Iraq War. It is doubtful

that large numbers of people within the Arab World have rejected the American point of view on Iraq because it has not been explained to them enough times or provided to them in a suitably packaged presentation. In a June 2005 Pew Global Attitudes survey, it became apparent that even popular policies like tsunami relief did little to reverse the magnitude of anti-Americanism.<sup>110</sup> Anti-American sentiment also tends to spike as a result of certain events such as the U.S./Iraq attacks on insurgents based in Fallujah or as a result of Israeli crackdowns on Palestinians, which often are assumed to be orchestrated with the approval of the United States. Yet, by 2006, many commentators within the region reluctantly had reversed themselves and maintained that a precipitous U.S. withdrawal would remove the most important obstacle to an Iraqi civil war.

## **ONGOING TENSIONS ASSOCIATED WITH THE GLOBAL WAR ON TERRORISM**

While differences over Israel/Palestine and Iraq dominated U.S.-Arab relations, other problems occasionally surfaced to aggravate the already strained set of relationships, thereby complicating U.S.-Arab military relations. Some of these concerns centered on U.S. actions outside of Iraq that have been associated with the Global War on Terrorism. The U.S. prison at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, most notably, has been of concern to a number of Arab countries and publics. A major problem here has been the recurring one of lurid and inflammatory overseas headlines emerging from questions surrounding U.S. administration of the Guantanamo Bay-based prison facilities. These questions about U.S. activities often tend to overshadow

the terrorist backgrounds of many of the inmates as they are reported by the world media. Additionally, some of the attorneys for various detainees grant interviews in which they relay prisoner charges of U.S. military misconduct and abuse. The shocking and repellant photos associated with the Abu Ghraib scandal in Iraq have created an atmosphere in which many of these charges are taken uncritically at face value.

Additionally, a recurring stream of damaging stories has emerged from the prison, much of it based on unsubstantiated information. The rumors of Koran desecration, reprinted by the U.S. magazine *Newsweek*, are especially inflammatory for pious Muslims. Such assertions added to a general belief that the United States did not respect Muslim values, and the Global War on Terrorism was actually a war on Islam. Moreover, *Newsweek's* decision to retract the story often was viewed, if erroneously, as the result of U.S. Government pressure on the publication rather than an accurate admission that the story was untrue.<sup>111</sup>

Another problem involves various ex-prisoners from Guantanamo who are now returning to their home countries with frightening claims of how they were treated while in custody.<sup>112</sup> Virtually all ex-prisoners giving interviews strongly maintain that they are innocent of any terrorist or extremist ties. These claims frequently are treated sympathetically by the Arab media as well as in many European media outlets.<sup>113</sup> Moreover, extensive criticism of the Guantanamo facility by European political and human rights figures also has been noticed by the global and Arab media and publics.<sup>114</sup> European criticism is viewed widely as less biased than that emerging from the Middle East. German Chancellor Angela Merkel, for example, called upon the United States to close Guantanamo prison,

although U.S. leadership responded that the prison “serves a purpose and is there for a reason.”<sup>115</sup> The human rights organization, Amnesty International, also has called upon the United States to close Guantanamo Bay.<sup>116</sup> Other reports of detainee abuse often find their way into the Western and Arab press, and nongovernmental organizations such as Human Rights Watch also have criticized the United States for its policies toward Muslim and Arab prisoners.<sup>117</sup> Of considerably less interest to the international media is that some of the prisoners released from Guantanamo have returned to terrorist activities in Arab countries following their repatriation.<sup>118</sup>

An additional ongoing problem involves questions as to whether the U.S. image may be hurt by various high profile problems between Europe and the Arab World despite strong, continuing, public U.S.-European differences over Middle East policy. Under this logic, the United States, as the perceived leader of the Western world, sometimes is tarnished by the actions of other Western states. Severe Muslim rioting in France in late 2005 was a reminder of some of the difficulty in integrating French society.<sup>119</sup> The Danish cartoon controversy was even more serious. Moreover, many in Europe wish to keep Turkey out of the European Union because it is large, economically unequal to Europe, and, most especially, Muslim. All of these problems can merge into an overall view of the West as intolerant and unfriendly toward Muslims.

Muslim and Arab anger about the invasion and occupation of Iraq also seems to have made it more difficult for U.S. officials to get a fair hearing for American policies in the war on terror, and at least some attempts to find common ground with Muslim reformers have been treated as efforts to change

the subject from Iraq.<sup>120</sup> Conversely, U.S. and Iraqi leaders sometimes have scolded regional leaders for distancing themselves from post-Saddam Iraq rather than taking a deeper interest in supporting efforts to make the Iraqi government a success. Iraqi leaders also have expressed disappointment that most Arab states have not sent ambassadors or even in some cases lower ranking diplomats to Iraq. President Talibani has called this “an insulting issue for the country,” but a variety of Arab states respond that Arab diplomats are not safe in Baghdad.<sup>121</sup> This position is extremely credible since a variety of Arab diplomats in Baghdad have been kidnapped, assassinated, or wounded in attacks by terrorists. The Jordanian Embassy itself was bombed in August 2003, with 19 dead and 65 wounded, although all remaining embassies in Iraq now appear much better protected and are thus more hardened targets against any future terrorist attacks.<sup>122</sup> The Iranians, who are striving consistently to enhance their influence in Iraq, appointed an ambassador to that country in May 2006.<sup>123</sup>

No major polls of Arab and Muslim publics suggest that the United States is unpopular primarily because of its culture as often is claimed. Rather, most polls suggest that U.S. policies, particularly toward the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and Iraq, are unpopular. Anecdotal evidence, nevertheless, does exist that many Arabs are worried about the excesses of Western culture and the omnipresence of this culture through globalization. Describing conditions in their country prior to the 1979 revolution, Iranians referred to these troubles as “Westoxification.” In response to concerns about Western cultural penetration, President Bush has stated that, “Some people in Muslim cultures identify democracy with the worst of Western popular culture

and want no part of it. And I assure them, when I speak about the blessings of liberty, coarse videos and crass commercialism are not what I have in mind.”<sup>124</sup> Other Western countries with even more liberal social policies are nevertheless popular with the Arab World, and claims that the United States is disliked for its policies (as well as its overwhelming power to implement them) appear credible. France and Germany both are viewed positively over foreign policy issues, although this may change with France due to the occasional spikes in high profile problems that Paris seems to have with its Muslim population.<sup>125</sup>

## **POST-SADDAM BASING POLICIES IN IRAQ AND THE U.S. WITHDRAWAL FROM SAUDI ARABIA**

One of the most immediate results of the 2003 Iraq war has been the evacuation of almost all U.S. military forces from Saudi Arabia. The decision to withdraw U.S. combat forces was announced in April 2003 with the apparent hope of obtaining an immediate foreign policy benefit from Saddam’s ouster.<sup>126</sup> As a result of this policy, the United States removed around 200 military aircraft from Prince Sultan Air Base, along with their supporting troops. Less than 500 U.S. military personnel remained in the Kingdom with most of these associated with military training missions for the Saudi armed forces.<sup>127</sup> This move came after a long series of military policy problems taking place between the U.S. armed forces and their Saudi hosts, including a Saudi interest in diversifying their weapons purchases away from the United States and concerns that Saudi Arabia was being asked to fund too many of the costs associated with the U.S.

presence. These defense specific concerns aggravated the more political problems involving disagreements over issues of Iraq, Afghanistan, and terrorism.<sup>128</sup> The removal of U.S. forces from Saudi Arabia also was seen as depriving Osama Bin Laden and other radicals of a critical issue upon which to base their propaganda campaign against the House of Saud. On the eve of the invasion, Saudi Arabia was hosting around 5,000 mostly Air Force U.S. military personnel operating primarily from the Prince Sultan Air Base.<sup>129</sup> The Saudi Arabian government may have felt considerable relief at the departure of these U.S. forces from their country, although this did not prevent the outbreak of anti-regime violence.<sup>130</sup> Additionally, a new joint U.S.-Saudi interest emerged in May 2003 when terrorists from al Qa'ida of the Arabian Peninsula began attacking U.S. and Saudi government targets within the country. Al-Qaeda claimed in making such attacks, they were "attack[ing] the rear of the American Army."<sup>131</sup> This is a somewhat unusual claim since major elements of the U.S. Army were not in Saudi Arabia, and the U.S. Air Force was leaving. The attacks continued sporadically throughout 2003 and 2004, but the worst of them appeared to be over by the beginning of 2005, at which time the government was clearly on the offensive against the militants.<sup>132</sup>

It is possible that the Saudis would have sought a U.S. withdrawal from their country even in the absence of the 2003 invasion of Iraq.<sup>133</sup> Over the years, Riyadh became increasingly disinterested in large-scale, routine, and conspicuous military cooperation with the United States while being reassured with regional developments that seemed to opt well for Saudi national security. In particular, Riyadh managed to improve its relationship with Iran, while believing that



Saddam's Iraq no longer constituted a grave offensive threat. The Saudis also objected to U.S. "pinprick raids" on Iraq, which they viewed as creating support for Saddam without doing anything to undermine his rule.<sup>134</sup> Nevertheless, there was an ironic side to the 2003 withdrawal of U.S. forces from Saudi Arabia. While the Saudi leadership was concerned with hostile propaganda resulting from a large U.S. military presence in their country, they also became apprehensive when the United States developed a special military relationship with Qatar, including a massive U.S. military presence in that country.<sup>135</sup> While the Saudi relationship with the United States is based fundamentally on oil and not bases, Riyadh may have worried that its influence in Washington was being diluted by U.S.-Qatari military ties. In the aftermath of the U.S. military withdrawal from Saudi Arabia, the smaller Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) states were therefore to become especially important as part of U.S. regional strategy and thus more able to resist Saudi advice and pressure. The Saudis, for their part, continue to purchase large amounts of U.S. and other Western arms and emphasize the continuing importance of a U.S.-Saudi dialogue on strategic issues.

The departure of U.S. military forces from Saudi Arabia has raised questions about the possibility of a future U.S. military presence at bases within Iraq for reasons beyond those of crushing the current insurgency and empowering a viable and survivable Iraqi government.<sup>136</sup> These proposals, which seem to originate with neoconservative writers, appear misplaced, given Iraq's long history of concern about Western domination and the possibility that a friendly Iraqi government could harm its own legitimacy by allowing U.S. bases to remain in that country for

other than the specific need to quell current disorders. Moreover, this study already has suggested that large and important Arab countries, including but not confined to Iraq, consistently have displayed unease with Western bases. Western bases hurt the credibility of states seeking Arab leadership or even an important voice within regional politics by making those states appear too responsive to foreign priorities.

Key U.S. policymakers understand the delicacy of this situation. Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld, in answer to a question at a press conference, stated that it was “inaccurate and unfortunate” to suggest that the United States was seeking permanent bases in Iraq.<sup>137</sup> Other senior officials such as U.S. Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad continue to insist that the United States does not wish to obtain permanent bases.<sup>138</sup> As valuable as these statements are, current U.S. officials may not be the individuals who are most likely to make a final decision on whether or not to seek permanent bases, since the insurgency and civil unrest are likely to continue until at least the end of the current administration. It is hoped that the next administration will reiterate such statements upon taking office if the United States continues to have troops in Iraq at that time and should the possibility of permanent bases appear sufficiently unresolved as to require clarification.

Additionally, the vast majority of Iraqi leaders have indicated that they do not support U.S. basing in their country beyond the time frame needed to quell the insurgency.<sup>139</sup> Many Iraqi leaders call for a rapid withdrawal of U.S. forces, but do not give more than a vague time frame (if that), as a way of playing to public opinion without compromising their country’s national security.<sup>140</sup> A few Iraqis, such as radical leader

Muqtada al Sadr of the Sadr II Movement and Harith al Dari of the Association of Muslim Scholars, have indicated that they favor an immediate withdrawal of all U.S. forces.<sup>141</sup> Virtually no serious U.S. policy experts or political leaders currently suggest that the United States should remain in Iraq if asked to leave by an elected government. Such a request seems to be a strong possibility should U.S. hopes for a self-confident Iraq to emerge from the current difficulties be realized.

Despite these problems, basing arrangements are necessary for those troops currently deployed in Iraq. Consequently, construction of acceptable facilities is continuing on the assumption that these bases will be of service so long as the United States remains in Iraq and can be turned over to Iraqi forces upon the U.S. departure. Currently, four of the most important basing locations in Iraq are Talil in the southern part of the country, Bilad Air Base (or Camp Anaconda) in central Iraq, al Asad airbase in Western Anbar province, and al Qayyarah in northern Iraq. All of these bases are some distance from major population centers and have vast infrastructures, and sometimes are referred to colloquially as “superbases.”<sup>142</sup>

The new large superbases being built by the United States currently have functions that are directly related to the suppression of the insurgency, and under some scenarios may remain in Iraq after the bulk of U.S. combat troops have departed to provide logistical support for the Iraqi military in assuming responsibility for fighting the insurgency.<sup>143</sup> Another scenario described by author Fred Kaplan involves the possibility that U.S. troops would remain locked down in these bases should full scale civil war break out in Iraq. This policy, according to Kaplan, would give

the United States “diplomatic leverage” and help to discourage foreign intervention by Iraq’s neighbors.<sup>144</sup> Unfortunately, no basing scheme provides total security for its personnel, and wide-ranging terrorist activities could be expected to claim a number of Americans lives under such circumstances. Such a scenario correspondingly would require a remarkable level of patience and understanding from the American public, since the idea of leaving troops in Iraq during a large-scale civil war may seem utterly appalling even if they are locked-down in large bases that limit the number of casualties.

## **U.S. MILITARY RELATIONS WITH EGYPT AND JORDAN**

### **Egypt.**

Two of the most important U.S. Arab allies, Egypt and Jordan, do not host U.S. permanent bases but are, nevertheless, important defense partners. Ideally, these nations will continue their highly-supportive role as U.S. partners, and it is possible that either of these states could serve as a model for a stable and friendly post-Saddam Iraq should such an entity emerge from the current struggle.

Cairo has continued to show sensitivity about any Western military presence on Egyptian soil except under crisis conditions or for joint training exercises. In 1981, for example, negotiations were conducted to allow U.S. use of the Egyptian port of Ras Banas if an Arab state were threatened.<sup>145</sup> Ultimately, these negotiations failed because the Egyptians viewed the United States as demanding too large a role in managing the facility, which was regarded as a matter of extreme sensitivity.

Nevertheless, around the same time, the United States and Egypt began their collaboration on regional security through the large and important "Bright Star" military exercises. These exercises were first conducted in the early 1980s and have continued to be held periodically (usually once every 2 years) ever since. In addition to the United States and Egypt, the exercises often involve contingents from other Arab and European North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) countries. Around 70,000 troops from 11 nations participated in Bright Star 2001, while Bright Star 2003 was cancelled due to troop requirements for the Iraq war.<sup>146</sup> Around 30,000 troops from 12 countries participated in Bright Star 2005.<sup>147</sup> The U.S. and international contributions to this exercise were more limited than usual due to continuing commitments in Iraq and elsewhere.

The U.S.-Egyptian security relationship probably reached its height in 1991 when Egyptian troops formed a highly visible part of the anti-Saddam coalition to liberate Kuwait. This relationship has remained steady through a series of significant political disagreements. Egypt publicly opposed the U.S.-led invasion of Afghanistan and especially the war in Iraq, but allowed the United States to use the Suez Canal and Egyptian airspace to support operations in these theaters. In addition, Cairo also accepted that cruise missiles would be fired from the Red Sea.<sup>148</sup> Egypt also has been reported to have been involved in intelligence cooperation and other forms of cooperation with the United States to support the struggle against international terrorism.<sup>149</sup> This close relationship with the United States over terrorism often is reinforced by Egyptian concerns about its own radical Islamists.

## Jordan.

Jordan is also an important Arab ally of the United States, although it does not allow the United States to maintain permanent bases on its soil. Amman does, however, participate in a variety of joint exercises with the United States, and extensive military cooperation exists between the two countries. Like Egypt, Jordan publicly opposed the war in Iraq, but it has chosen to work with the United States despite the disagreement. To this end, Jordan even allowed a limited and temporary U.S. military presence on its soil in 2003 for participation in the war itself. This presence has been confirmed by Ambassador L. Paul Bremer in his memoirs, *My Year in Iraq*. In describing the relationship, Bremer stated that Jordan “had helped us considerably during the invasion, allowing Coalition Special Operations forces to operate from its territory,” although he does not mention numbers.<sup>150</sup> In *Cobra II*, by Michael Gordon and retired U.S. Marine Corps Lieutenant General Bernard Trainor, the authors state that the United States and Jordan engaged in lengthy negotiations over the size and type of U.S. force to be stationed in Jordan to support the hostilities. Gordon and Trainor suggest the eventual agreed-upon troop strength was 5,000 U.S. soldiers, down from a U.S. request to put 14,000 troops in the kingdom.<sup>151</sup> During the war, the presence of a large number of combat soldiers in the kingdom remained a closely guarded secret, although the Jordanian government did admit that U.S. troops had been stationed in Jordan for potential search-and-rescue missions from its airfields and to install Patriot anti-missile systems.<sup>152</sup> Nevertheless, Jordanian complicity with the United States was widely suspected at the time, and this collaboration may have been one of

the reasons terrorists bombed the Jordanian Embassy in Iraq in 2003.

Following Saddam's ouster, Jordan undertook an ambitious U.S.-supported program to train selected Iraqi officers, soldiers, and policemen.<sup>153</sup> Bremer called this effort "the world's largest police training program."<sup>154</sup> While the program was valuable in providing training and instilling professionalism, this effort was not enough to reform and re-build the Iraqi police in the short term. The election of highly sectarian leaders in Iraq complicated police professionalization, since various internal security figures sought to bring their favored militiamen into the interior ministry. Militiamen associated with the most important Shi'ite political parties consequently were favored for admission into the Interior Ministry police forces in a number of instances.<sup>155</sup> Efforts at reform may have rolled back this practice to some extent, although the ultimate value of the Jordanian training program remains uncertain. If the program does fail, it will apparently do so because of the divisive nature of Iraqi politics rather than for any shortcomings attributable to the Jordanians.

## **THE POST-SADDAM THREAT ENVIRONMENT AND THE GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL**

As noted earlier, a number of the smaller Gulf Arab states established formal bilateral security relations with the United States in the aftermath of the 1991 Iraq War. These relationships were treated publicly as a supplement to the GCC defense framework, but in practice they were developed in the certain knowledge that the GCC could not deter aggression on its own. Before examining those bilateral ties, it is worth

considering the nature of the GCC itself, including its problems with collective defense. The GCC was formed in May 1981 in the aftermath of the emergence of the Islamic Republic of Iran (1979) and the outbreak of the Iran-Iraq War (1980-88). The organization's purpose was to help coordinate the foreign, defense, and internal security policies of the member states. The states that comprise the GCC are Bahrain, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Each of these states maintains a similar type of political system, and all have a general interest in containing revolutionary ideologies, terrorists, and hostile states that may threaten their futures.

Despite common concerns, serious military cooperation among the GCC states has remained an elusive goal, and there is little likelihood that the GCC will act in a united way in any future crisis. Kuwait's GCC membership was not even the shadow of a deterrent against an Iraqi invasion of that country in 1990, and the other GCC states were unable to help Kuwait without massive reliance on U.S. and other military intervention. Nor does it appear that the GCC's military capabilities have improved dramatically since that time. In a recent authoritative study, GCC military cooperation was described as largely a "hollow shell."<sup>156</sup> The same study stated that the GCC collective defense program is characterized by token forces and exercises, along with numerous meetings, speeches, reports, and other paperwork that has led to almost no meaningful progress.<sup>157</sup> The vast majority of serious decisions about Gulf security issues continue to be made at a unilateral (or bilateral) rather than a multilateral level. Former CENTCOM Commander General Anthony Zinni has stated bilateral cooperation with the United States often was less difficult for these countries than multilateral



cooperation with each other.<sup>158</sup> Consequently, the difficulties that the Gulf Arab states have in cooperating with each other on any meaningful military level helps to ensure that each of these states will continue to need support from outside powers and will be particularly interested in maintaining strong relations with the United States. Furthermore, even a united GCC would be an unequal match for an assertive Iran or a hostile and mobilized Iraq, should such an entity emerge from the current effort to define and develop a post-Saddam political system.

Yet, strong Gulf Arab ties with the United States also may obfuscate the fact that these links remain subject to disruption, downgrading, and serious domestic criticism within the Gulf countries. According to one informed observer, Gulf Arabs have the potential to become more anti-American than any other Arab group because of their strong dependence on the West.<sup>159</sup> A dependency relationship with a country which they may see as a demanding and often unfair benefactor can be a serious problem for smooth relations between the United States and the GCC states. According to General Zinni, these problems also can be aggravated by "the usual American know it all arrogance that tells [the Gulf Arabs] what they ought to be doing."<sup>160</sup> Moreover, it would be a mistake to conclude that the Gulf Arabs will tolerate public disrespect indefinitely because of their present dependence. While the current leaderships of the Gulf Arab states are willing to work with the United States to overcome bilateral problems, significant portions of the populations of these countries may become more open to anti-American polemics and propaganda if the United States visibly treats their countries in disrespectful ways (as occurred during to Dubai Ports World controversy, to be discussed later).

The Gulf Arab states also have some extremely serious security concerns including a militant Iran, an uncertain future for Iraq, and a variety of other problems. These states thus maintain normal diplomatic and economic relations with Iran, while often worrying about Tehran's intentions. Current Iranian president Mahmoud Amadinajad, in addition to being a hardliner on the United States and Israel, is known to be an extreme nationalist, who is at home with the idea that Iran should dominate the Gulf.<sup>161</sup> The Gulf Arab states also are significantly more concerned about Iranian nuclear weapons ambitions than most other Arab countries, and Gulf Arabs are far less likely to dismiss the issue by expressing countervailing concerns about the Israeli nuclear program.<sup>162</sup> The destruction of the Saddam Hussein regime and the uncertainty of its successor suggest that the Gulf states can no longer depend on strategic balance between Baghdad and Tehran. Additionally, the 1991 invasion of Kuwait suggests that a policy of trying to balance these two states needs to break down only once in a while to have catastrophic results.

The tension between Iran and the GCC states sometimes bubbles to the surface, and some Iranian officials still seem to hold a grudge for Gulf Arab support to Saddam during the Iran-Iraq war. Ali Larijani, the Secretary of Iran's Supreme National Security Council (SNSC), for example, has stated, "When have we ever attacked a neighbouring country in the last 150 years? We were the ones attacked by Saddam and then [the Gulf Arab states] backed him."<sup>163</sup> As harsh as this comment appears, it is true that most Gulf Arab states, and especially Kuwait, strongly backed Saddam Hussein in the war with Iran.<sup>164</sup> Kuwait, to the leadership's later regret, was an exceptionally strong

financial and diplomatic supporter of the Iraqis during the war with Iran.

Some of the smaller Gulf states also may be worried about the stability and future of Saudi Arabia, although the officials of these countries would be among the last to admit this concern publicly. A long and bloody series of terrorist events in Saudi Arabia during 2004 was viewed by some Gulf Arabs as at least suggesting that a radical anti-monarchist regime could emerge on the ashes of the House of Saud in the aftermath of a successful revolution. The fall of the Saudi monarchy would have seismic effects on the small countries surrounding that country, and any successor government would probably look with distain on the remaining monarchies of the Gulf.

Despite these common concerns, the smaller Gulf states must be considered individually since they maintain discrete as well as collective defense concerns that have led them to seek defense partnerships with the United States. The states, considered below, are now among the most important U.S. security partners.

## **Qatar.**

Qatar is a small and wealthy GCC monarchy with a long history of political and military cooperation with the United States and other Western states. Like its neighbors, Bahrain and the UAE, Qatar became independent from Great Britain in 1971. At the time of its independence, Qatar already had moved forward dramatically in the transition from the deeply impoverished state of the 1930s to one of the wealthiest per capita countries in the world. Currently, the Qatari population is almost 900,000, but less than 30 percent of these people are Qatari citizens. The rest are guest workers.<sup>165</sup>

Oil was discovered in Qatar in 1939, although exploitation was delayed by World War II. After the war, oil revenues began funding the radical expansion and modernization of the Qatari infrastructure. Eventually Qatar's petroleum resources were seriously depleted, but these problems were rendered insignificant by Qatari exploitation of natural gas. Qatar is now known to possess the world's third largest independent natural gas deposits.<sup>166</sup> By the 1990s, Qatar's modernization fed by this wealth was such that it had emerged as one of the world's most lavish welfare states. Yet, because of limited human resources, Qatar has only a cosmetic capacity for self-defense. Qatar, correspondingly, became a rich potential prize for any aggressive regional power and thus has a clear need for the support of an external protector. It is inconceivable that this country could ever develop its own military resources to the point that they could defend the country in a military conflict with one of its larger neighbors.

A key set of defining events for Qatari foreign policy was the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait and the subsequent 1991 war to liberate Kuwait. Following the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, Doha sided decisively with the U.S.-led coalition. Qatar announced that it would allow coalition troops on its soil, and Qatari military forces were sent to participate in the military campaign to the extent that their limited numbers allowed. Perhaps surprisingly, given their small numbers, these troops found themselves involved in the Battle of Khafji, Saddam's only major effort at offensive ground action against coalition forces during the war (involving the elements of two Iraqi divisions).<sup>167</sup> The Qataris fought bravely during the battle, and at one point a force of 22 Qatari tanks and a battalion of Saudi infantry led two separate but

unsuccessful attacks to retake the town of Khafji from the Iraqi force. Unfortunately, Qatari forces also made a number of serious tactical mistakes throughout the battle, including firing on Saudi armored vehicles that were misidentified as Iraqi.<sup>168</sup> Khafji was not retaken until U.S. airpower and artillery strikes had pulverized the Iraqi defense thoroughly, thereby allowing Qatari and Saudi forces to return there on the third effort to take the city.<sup>169</sup>

Perhaps somewhat surprisingly for a wealthy state, there has been relatively little military modernization and expansion in the Qatari armed forces since the 1991 war, and there has been no serious movement to begin purchasing militarily significant quantities of U.S. weapons. The size of the military also has remained small, with about 12,000 personnel, of which 8,500 are in the army. The Qataris did, however, sign a bilateral defense cooperation agreement with the United States in 1995. This agreement reverses the previous Qatari policy of remaining distant from the major powers, such as Kuwait had done prior to 1990. Moreover, Doha has made serious efforts to develop and consolidate strong U.S. military ties since 1995, and this effort is clearly the most important pillar of Qatar's national security policy. According to the Qatari Foreign Minister, "We need the United States here in Qatar, and the United States needs us."<sup>170</sup> The Qataris also have sought to expand friendly relations and, in some cases, security ties with numerous Arab, European, and other states as a hedge against international isolation in a crisis. Interestingly, Qatar also maintains an overt and strong trading relationship with Israel, although Doha is careful to direct sympathy and support to the Palestinians as well.<sup>171</sup>

Although Qatar was publicly opposed to the initiation of U.S. hostilities with Iraq in 2003, this

opposition never seemed all that serious and may have been confined to occasional vacuous rhetoric in public forums. Prior to the war, former Qatari Justice Minister Najeeb al Nauimi stated, "Anything is better than that man [Saddam] . . . For now, the interests of the Iraqis coincide with those of the Americans, and the Iraqi people should take advantage of this before the Americans change their minds."<sup>172</sup> Even more authoritatively, the emir of Qatar privately told the former Commander of U.S. Central Command, "General Franks, you have the opportunity to save the Iraqi people."<sup>173</sup> The contradiction between these statements and some public statements about avoiding war is comprehensible when considering that Qatar wants a special relationship with the United States, but does not wish to take public stands that unnecessarily antagonize its neighbors. Additionally, Qatari leaders did not wish to make belligerent statements in public so long as they believed that a chance remained for a last minute U.S.-Iraqi deal that left Saddam in power.

In an especially important display of pre-war U.S.-Qatari cooperation, the CENTCOM forward command headquarters was moved to Camp as Saliya, Qatar, in late 2002.<sup>174</sup> Prior to this move, Camp as Saliyah had served primarily as a military depot for U.S. forces operating in the Gulf, and it also was used as a staging area for U.S. forces fighting in Afghanistan.<sup>175</sup> The Qataris made serious overtures to the United States to encourage this move despite the likely possibility of a new U.S.-Iraqi war. The arrangement has continued since that time and seems to work well. Camp as Saliyah on the edge of Doha, nevertheless, was not envisioned by either country as a permanent base. It is the smaller of the two major U.S. bases in Qatar and is expected to close over the next several years due to its position on

valuable real estate and the temporary nature of many of its structures and facilities. U.S. forces at Camp as Saliyah will be stationed elsewhere in Qatar without any planned reduction in the total size of U.S. forces in that country.

Qatar's al Udeid Air Base is a much more important asset for supporting U.S. strategy in the region. Al Udeid has the longest runway in the Middle East (15,000 feet) and was built by the Qataris at a cost of \$1 billion.<sup>176</sup> Since Qatar has an exceptionally small air force, it seems safe to assume that Doha built this facility as a way to improve its military relations with the United States and safeguard its own security by serving as a host country to a large and powerful U.S. military presence. Al Udeid played an important role in supporting U.S. air operations during the U.S.-led war to oust the Taliban regime in Afghanistan, although this was not well-known at the time. Additionally, the base proved exceptionally valuable during the conventional stage of the Iraq war. As the insurgency in Iraq intensified, the al Udeid Air base also has remained important to the United States to support ongoing operations in that country. Increased airlifts of supplies from Qatar to Iraq were initiated to reduce the number of more vulnerable supply convoys.<sup>177</sup> The U.S. Navy also cooperates with Qatari authorities, who support a number of port visits. Currently, Qatar does not have an aircraft carrier capable port, although it is expanding its current port facilities in Doha and is expected to be able to accommodate a U.S. attack carrier within a few years, if both states find this advantageous.

The U.S.-Qatari relationship seems to be moving forward despite the potential problems with U.S.-Arab relations over the continuation of the Iraq war. President Bush visited Qatar in June 2003 as part of a

wider Middle Eastern tour. He was the first serving U.S. president to do so.<sup>178</sup> In another example of good bilateral relations, the emir of Qatar gave \$100 million to the U.S. victims of Hurricane Katrina in the aftermath of the disaster in August 2005.<sup>179</sup> The United States also appears satisfied that Qatar is stable and making satisfactory progress toward democratic government. Although the current emir came to power in a coup d'état against his father on June 27, 1995, he appears to have made considerable progress in uniting the population behind him.<sup>180</sup> Qatar also is engaging in some efforts at political reform. In April 2003, voters approved a new constitution which creates a 45-member parliament, with 30 elected members and the rest selected by the emir. Additionally, Qatar formally lifted censorship of the media in 1995 and has abolished its Ministry of Information, which previously had performed that function.<sup>181</sup> Although informal censorship still exists on subjects related to Qatari governance, Qatar nevertheless has one of the least censored medias in the Middle East.<sup>182</sup> This situation sometimes has angered the United States because of the freewheeling aspects of the al Jazeera satellite television network, but this highly controversial station may provide Qatar with the political cover to maintain its expanded military relationship with the United States. It also serves as a vehicle – really a weapon – for Qatar to defend itself against hostile regional criticism of its friendly relations with the United States and its trade relationship with Israel.

Serious post-Saddam threats also bind the United States and Qatar together. These concerns center on the danger of a more assertive Iran and an insufficiently stabilized Iraq or a new Iraqi dictatorship. Of these threats, Iran is the most serious Qatari concern due to its



location directly across the Gulf. The Qatari leadership, while distrustful of Iran, also has attempted to manage relations with Tehran in ways that minimize friction between the two nations.<sup>183</sup> These efforts appear to have been largely successful, and no recent serious tensions have occurred in the relationship between the two countries. Nevertheless, Qatar is aware of its own vulnerability to Iranian military operations should the Iranians feel that such attacks would be in their interests.

While not a threat in the same sense as Iran, Qatar also has a series of ongoing problems with Saudi Arabia. Strong ties with the United States and a variety of other nations may be deemed useful in giving the Qataris the leverage and self-confidence to argue their cases more forcefully in their interactions with Riyadh. The Saudis at various times have become especially angry with Doha over such issues as the occasionally unfavorable portrayal of Saudi Arabia by Qatar's al Jazeera satellite television.<sup>184</sup> Relations also have been reported to have been strained by Saudi disapproval of Qatar's economic relations with Israel.<sup>185</sup> The Qataris, for their part, are unhappy with Saudi backing for a 1996 attempted countercoup designed to reinstall the father of the current emir.<sup>186</sup> Many Qatari officials also have expressed exasperation with the "big brother/little brother" relationship they sometimes suggest characterizes Saudi Arabian attitudes toward their country.<sup>187</sup>

On the domestic front, Qatar has had only limited problems with terrorism, but it does have some.<sup>188</sup> In June 2005, Jonathan Adams, a British drama teacher, was killed in Doha, and 12 other people were wounded in a suicide car bombing by an Egyptian expatriate working for Qatar Petroleum.<sup>189</sup> The Qatari government

responded to the attack by urging its citizens and expatriates to join a “Rally of Indignation” protesting the murder of a British citizen.<sup>190</sup> Pro-Western posters were put up, and full-page ads in Qatari newspapers offered condolences to Adams’ widow and children. U.S. military leaders, including CENTCOM’s Major General John Castellaw, have stated in 2005 that Qatar is working well with the United States to fight terrorism.<sup>191</sup>

Qatari citizens consistently seem much more willing to accept a U.S. military presence than a variety of other Arabs, and no serious Qatari opposition to the U.S. presence appears to have developed despite ongoing U.S.-Arab differences over a variety of political and policy issues. U.S. policy in Qatar also seeks to avoid antagonizing the local culture to the greatest extent possible. Qataris call themselves Wahhabi Muslims, but their behavior and approach to Islam is nevertheless much less puritanical than the type of Wahhabi Islam found in Saudi Arabia. Women can drive cars, and some have chosen to wear Western-style dress. The current emir has stated that his two daughters are free to choose their own style of dress, and that one has chosen Western-style dress, while the other favors traditional clothing. The difference between the Qatari and Saudi outlook is sometimes ascribed to a Qatari history of seaborne trade which has caused them to have a much wider set of interactions with foreign values and ideas than the more insular Saudis.<sup>192</sup>

### **United Arab Emirates.**

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) is a collection of seven emirates which have formed a federal government and functioned as a single state since

December 1971. Prior to 1971, the UAE sheikhdoms were known as the Trucial States and had separate treaty relations with the United Kingdom (UK). The UK military presence in the Trucial States (except for a small number of military advisors) had been phased out over the years following the United Kingdom's 1967 announcement to withdraw major military units stationed east of Suez by 1971.<sup>193</sup> The country itself currently has a population of only around three million people, of which up to 80 percent are resident foreigners. The UAE is one of the wealthiest countries in the world, and has been careful to structure its international relations to facilitate widespread international and particularly Western concern about any national security threat to the UAE. To this end, the UAE has invited massive Western investment and building, made large purchases including military purchases from Western countries, engaged in symbolic acts of friendship, and sought other forms of cooperation.<sup>194</sup> Moreover, the UAE, and especially its constituent emirate of Dubai, has hosted a variety of international conferences, events, and festivals designed to raise the international profile of the state and perhaps increase the ranks of its international supporters.<sup>195</sup>

These precautions seem wise since serious national security concerns do exist. In particular, the UAE leadership is uneasy about Iranian intentions, and the Emirati leadership also is concerned that problems arising from Iraqi insecurity might affect the country. The Iranian claim to three Gulf islands which it took from the UAE emirates of Ras al-Khayma and Sharja in 1971 is a continuing problem in UAE-Iranian relations.<sup>196</sup> At least some elements within the UAE appear to remain angry and distrustful of Iran over the islands issue, with both sides asserting strong claims of sovereignty to the area. The UAE has attempted

to pursue this issue through the International Court of Justice, but no real progress has been made. Like some of the other Gulf states, the UAE has displayed a superficial willingness to work with the Iranians, and the UAE emirate of Dubai has a large ethnic Iranian minority. Nevertheless, Emirati pragmatism about Iran does not equal trust.

In 1994 the UAE signed a military cooperation agreement with the United States, and it has similar agreements with the UK and France.<sup>197</sup> The UAE also has a significantly larger and more modern military than most of the other small Gulf states.<sup>198</sup> Unlike Qatar, UAE clearly is willing to spend significant resources on military modernization. To this end, the Emirati Ministry of Defense recently has purchased 80 F-16 fighter aircraft from the United States, the first of which were delivered in May 2005. These “Desert Falcons” were developed with the UAE contributing \$2 billion to the cost of new technologies associated with their components and systems.<sup>199</sup> Nevertheless, the UAE appears to be plagued by what Middle East security expert Anthony Cordesman refers to as the “glitter factor.” Elaborating on this problem, Cordesman suggests that the UAE seems more determined to make expensive showcase purchases than to develop serious military capabilities.<sup>200</sup> Such concerns are serious, particularly since the UAE has only limited human resources to apply to the needs of national defense. The military itself draws its manpower heavily from its five less wealthy northern and eastern emirates but also must include foreign expatriate soldiers at the lower enlisted ranks.<sup>201</sup>

The crisis in the international system created by the 9/11 attacks against the United States caused the UAE to seek new ways to strengthen relations with the United States and the West. The U.S.-UAE relationship

is a core element of UAE foreign policy, and in the aftermath of the strikes appeared to be threatened because the UAE had maintained normal ties with the Taliban regime in Afghanistan and because two of the 9/11 hijackers were Emiratis.<sup>202</sup> The ties with the Taliban particularly were embarrassing to the UAE since they resulted from an act of official policy, and UAE-Afghan diplomatic relations were severed quickly. These ties originally had been established at the urgings of Pakistan in 1997 before Bin Laden appeared to be a serious threat to the United States.<sup>203</sup> The UAE later complied with UN sanctions initiated in late 2000 against the Taliban government for continuing to harbor Osama Bin Laden.<sup>204</sup>

A variety of U.S. commentators have raised concerns about pre-9/11 UAE ties with the Taliban, but these concerns must be placed in the context of the regional situation. The high point of UAE-Taliban ties came at the time when the upheaval in Afghanistan appeared to be a major distraction for Iranian foreign policy away from the Gulf. In August 1998, Iran appeared close to war with the Taliban regime after a Taliban unit entered the Iranian Consulate in Mazar-e-Sharif and murdered 11 Iranian citizens including diplomats, intelligence officers, and a journalist. These murders occurred as part of much wider massacre of Afghan Shi'ites (Hazaras) throughout the city in direct retaliation for similar treatment directed at the Taliban in 1997. While the crisis eventually subsided after the temporary massing of around 200,000 Iranian troops on the Afghan border, serious Iranian problems with their eastern flank must have been viewed with some favor by the UAE leadership.<sup>205</sup>

The UAE's geopolitical reasons for flirting with Iran's Taliban enemies collapsed after 9/11, and the UAE, as

noted, severed diplomatic relations with Afghanistan within 2 weeks of the attacks. Additionally, UAE military facilities quickly were made available to the United States for use in Operation ENDURING FREEDOM, the U.S. bombing and invasion of Afghanistan. The UAE also moved rapidly in ordering its financial institutions to freeze the assets of 63 organizations and individuals suspected by the United States of financing terrorist movements.<sup>206</sup> The UAE also was quick to welcome the post-Taliban transformation of Afghanistan. UAE-Afghan diplomatic relations were reestablished by then interim Afghan leader Hamid Karzai in February 2002, with the UAE pledging to provide economic assistance to the new Afghan government.<sup>207</sup> In another act of solidarity, the UAE pledged \$100 million in aid to the U.S. victims of Hurricane Katrina.<sup>208</sup>

As with some of the other Gulf states, the UAE was prepared to help the United States with the 2003 invasion of Iraq, but the Emirati leadership also preferred not to emphasize that role as a hedge to avoid antagonizing other Arab states and perhaps some elements of their own indigenous and resident foreign population. U.S. officials have stated that the UAE gave valuable support to the war effort against Iraq by expanding the Dhafra Air Base near Abu Dhabi and making it available to coalition aircraft.<sup>209</sup> This contribution became much more widely known during the controversy that followed the announcement of what was to be called the Dubai Ports World controversy when incidents of support to U.S. security operations in the Gulf were posted on the White House web site.<sup>210</sup>

Currently, the UAE is one of the most reliable allies that the United States has for providing military facilities and logistical bases for U.S. forces in the region. One of the most important of these facilities is the

above-noted Dhafra Air Base. Around 1,500 American military personnel live and work at this airbase, which supports a variety of missions of considerable national security value to the United States.<sup>211</sup> Additionally, the Dhafra Air Base is home to the Gulf Air Warfare Center, a major training facility for a variety of allied pilots.<sup>212</sup> According to British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) reporting, the UAE also allows U-2 (TR-1) high altitude reconnaissance flights from this air base. This role was highlighted tragically by the BBC in June 2005 when they reported that one of these planes crashed after having completed a mission in support of U.S. troops in Afghanistan. According to the BBC, this aircraft seems to have been lost for reasons other than enemy fire.<sup>213</sup>

The UAE further provides important support to the U.S. Navy. According to the White House, the UAE's Dubai port of Jebel Ali hosts hundreds of U.S. Navy ships and, in total, supports more U.S. Navy ship visits than conducted at any other non-U.S. port.<sup>214</sup> Moreover, Jebel Ali is considered one of the best equipped ports to support U.S. Navy operations and the provisioning of U.S. Navy ships.<sup>215</sup> This provisioning involves everything from fresh vegetables to fuel to spare parts. This is the only facility among the smaller Arab Gulf states which is able to accommodate a large U.S. attack aircraft carrier, although these ships also are moored off the coast of Bahrain, with members of the crew going ashore ferried back and forth by small boat.<sup>216</sup> Jebel Ali also is well-protected by a variety of anti-terrorism measures.<sup>217</sup>

The UAE does not seem to have major problems with terrorism, although there have been occasional difficulties. These problems may increase as a result of the UAE decision to side decisively with the United

States in the war on terrorism. In March 2004, the embassy in Abu Dhabi and the Consulate General in Dubai suspended operations due to a “specific threat to the embassy in Abu Dhabi.”<sup>218</sup> Moreover, the UAE has been directly threatened by al Qa’ida because of its close relations with the West and particularly the United States.<sup>219</sup> It is easy to suspect that al Qa’ida has become progressively angrier with the UAE in period after 9/11 when it, as noted above, renounced ties to the Taliban and began to crack down on questionable money transactions in Dubai and other UAE banks. The crackdown on money laundering seems particularly problematic to al Qa’ida and involves the enforcement of major new UAE banking and financial laws.<sup>220</sup> The UAE has been reported to be highly cooperative with U.S. security officials on financial issues, and one account by author Ron Suskind suggests that UAE officials became perhaps even somewhat overzealous in freezing suspect accounts.<sup>221</sup>

U.S.-UAE relations are subject to problems and were disrupted over the controversy that followed the announcement of the Dubai Ports World agreement, but this damage will probably not be permanent. The set of problems that became known as the Dubai Ports World controversy involved a UAE company that sought to acquire Britain’s Peninsular and Oriental Steam Navigation (P&O) Corporation in a \$6.8 billion purchase. This purchase, by the third largest ports company in the world, would allow Dubai Ports World to take over the management of six major U.S. ports—Newark, New York, Baltimore, New Orleans, Miami, and Philadelphia. There was very little reason to suspect that the deal would become controversial since other U.S. port terminals have been managed by companies from the United Kingdom, China, Japan,



Singapore, and Taiwan.<sup>222</sup> Additionally, the U.S. Coast Guard, harbor police, U.S. Department of Customs, port authorities, and other U.S. security organizations would continue to control the physical security of the ports, regardless of who operated them.<sup>223</sup> The UAE would not determine the workers to be hired at the U.S. ports, who would instead be supplied by the longshoreman's union.<sup>224</sup>

Unfortunately, the agreement was controversial despite the safeguards that it included. According to U.S. reporters and public opinion specialists, objections over the agreement were first seized upon by incendiary "talk" radio commentators and soon spread to influence U.S. public opinion.<sup>225</sup> This is not the place to examine the domestic politics of the deal except to note that they were severe and presented a difficult challenge to an administration attempting to treat an Arab ally with friendship and respect. In considering the acceptability of the deal, some critics maintained that the UAE was enforcing the Arab League boycott of Israel, and that this made them an unacceptable political partner for the United States.<sup>226</sup> Such charges accurately reflected the formal UAE position on trade and other economic interactions with Israel, but they did not reflect the more subtle ways in which the UAE can do business. Nor was the UAE prepared to let the criticism stand. Shortly after the charges were leveled, the head of Zim, Israel's largest shipping company, sent a letter supporting Dubai Ports World to a leading U.S. Senator.<sup>227</sup> The letter, which was quickly made public, stated that the Board of Directors at Zim strongly supported the deal, had done extensive business with Dubai Ports World, and felt the Dubai Ports World was an exceptionally solid partner. The letter almost certainly was sent as the result of a UAE request.

In response to the firestorm of criticism, Dubai Ports World announced in March 2006 that it would sell the rights to operate the six U.S. terminals to a U.S. company within 6 months.<sup>228</sup> The message sent to the Arab World over this issue was abominable. Arab allies would be treated with suspicion solely because they were Arab. Nevertheless, in a valuable effort to limit the damage of the DP controversy, the U.S. Government approved a \$1.24 billion UAE takeover of Doncasters, a British engineering company with U.S. plants that supply the Department of Defense.<sup>229</sup> President Bush also declared his personal commitment to improved relations with the UAE, stating, "In order to win the war on terror, we've got to strengthen our relationships and friendships with moderate Arab countries in the Middle East. The UAE is a committed ally in the war on terror. They are a key partner for our military in a critical region."<sup>230</sup>

## **Kuwait.**

Kuwait has a native population of just fewer than one million citizens and perhaps as many as two million foreigners within the country. It also has 10 percent of the world's known oil reserves. The first of these large oil reserves was discovered in 1937, and massive infrastructure development based on oil revenues began after the end of World War II. Like several other small states in the region, Kuwait is both rich and vulnerable, and this vulnerability was underscored in the most tangible way when the country was invaded and brutally occupied in 1990. Kuwait has been one of the most important Arab allies of the United States since the liberation of that country in 1991. The 1990 invasion and the subsequent Iraqi occupation were

defining national traumas for Kuwait. The Kuwaitis, correspondingly, have made great efforts to ensure that such an event will never be repeated.

In the immediate aftermath of the 1991 liberation, the U.S.-Kuwaiti relationship often was viewed by both sides as a “special relationship,” with the two countries drawn together by, among other things, shared concern about Gulf security and residual Iraqi troublemaking. In making the decision to consolidate its military and political ties to the West, Kuwait quietly discarded security agreements based on the March 1991 “Damascus Declaration,” which called for the protection of Kuwait by the indefinite stationing of Egyptian and Syrian troops on its soil.<sup>231</sup> This “Arab forces” security option was disregarded by the Kuwaitis as unreliable, expensive, and subject to possible politicization within the context of inter-Arab politics. Kuwait’s basic guarantee of security therefore remained dependent on its relationship with the United States, which it continually has sought to maintain and improve. On April 1, 2004, Kuwait was made a “major non-NATO ally,” a distinction it shares with about a dozen other countries, which in the Middle East include Bahrain, Egypt, Jordan, and Israel.<sup>232</sup> In another recent act of relationship maintenance, Kuwait, like many of the other Gulf Arab states, pledged financial assistance to the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The Kuwaitis promised \$100 million and an additional \$400 million in oil products.<sup>233</sup>

The Kuwaiti leadership also attempted to modernize the armed forces following the 1991 war when that force’s military shortcomings rapidly became clear. Kuwaiti forces at the time of the invasion were too small and unprepared to serve as much of an obstacle when the Iraqis struck. Kuwaiti units therefore were

unable to cause the Iraqis more than minor delays, and most of the ground forces rapidly fell apart.<sup>234</sup> Many of Kuwait's 20,000 ground troops were killed or captured, although up to 7,000 soldiers escaped across the Saudi border. Some units of the Kuwaiti Air Force operating from the southern part of their country attacked advancing Iraqi armored and mechanized units before their air base was overrun and they were forced to flee to Saudi Arabia.<sup>235</sup> Later, during the U.S.-led offensive to retake that country, remaining Kuwaiti military units were attached to other Arab forces in supporting this effort.<sup>236</sup>

In the aftermath of the 1991 war, the Kuwaitis moved to improve their military forces as well as their relations with Western and other global powers, although Kuwait also had difficulties meeting its own self-defense goals. Kuwait purchased U.S.-made F-18 *Hornet* aircraft and expanded its military to include a number of U.S.-equipped ground force brigades, but it also faced difficulty manning them and providing them with appropriate levels of maintenance and support. Anthony Cordesman has noted that with an active duty force of 11,500 soldiers, Kuwait has only enough troops to stand up two maneuver combat brigades and that Kuwaiti brigades actually resemble large battalions. Nevertheless, the Kuwaitis have made a serious effort to work through these problems. Cordesman also notes that Kuwaiti training as of 2003 had been effective at the brigade and squadron level, and the ability of these units to deploy and fight had risen significantly.<sup>237</sup>

Kuwaiti concern about Iraq after 1991 also was reinforced periodically by threatening gestures toward that country by the Saddam regime. One particularly notable confrontation occurred in October 1994 when

the Iraqis moved two Republican Guard divisions from areas around Baghdad to positions about 12 miles from the Kuwaiti border.<sup>238</sup> The United States, as noted earlier, responded to the crisis by rushing troops to the area to serve as a deterrent against Iraqi aggression. Another crisis occurred in February 1998, when U.S. troop strength in Kuwait was increased in preparation to any Iraqi counterstrike after the beginning of Operation DESERT FOX. The U.S. decision to punish Saddam for his noncooperation with UN weapons inspectors also carried the risk that he would lash out at pro-American states such as Kuwait. In both cases, Iraq prudently chose not to strike at Kuwait, apparently understanding that it would not benefit from a process of military escalation with the United States.

Due to their hatred and fear of Saddam, the Kuwaitis were the most supportive of any Arab country in backing the planned invasion of Iraq in 2003. In the preparation phase for the coming war, Kuwaiti bases hosting U.S. and other coalition troops occupied over one-quarter of the country by providing space for military encampments, training facilities, and artillery ranges.<sup>239</sup> Kuwait also supplied U.S. military forces entering into Iraq with fuel for their vehicles and equipment at no cost. Later, the Kuwaitis sought nominal payment for fuel supplied to U.S. forces remaining in Iraq after Saddam's ouster.<sup>240</sup> Kuwaitis still refer to the 2003 invasion as the "liberation of Iraq," terminology almost never found elsewhere in the Arab World. Nor were they hesitant about asserting the importance of this phrase in March 2003 when the UAE-based pan Arab television station, al Arabiya, described the conflict only as the "third gulf war." Angry that the conflict was not referred to as "the liberation of Iraq," Kuwaiti backers of the station pulled a quarter of its funding.<sup>241</sup>

Despite their enthusiasm for Operation IRAQI FREEDOM, many Kuwaitis are deeply uncertain about the future of Iraq and how still unfolding events there ultimately will affect them. While virtually all Kuwaitis were delighted to see Saddam removed from power, they also recognize that problems with Iraq could continue to grow and develop in the aftermath of Saddam's ouster. While Kuwait strongly and openly supported the U.S. decision to oust Saddam, some Kuwaitis are angry with what they see as a botched occupation that was based on minimal planning and coordination with allies in the region.<sup>242</sup> They also worry about the possibility of another Iraqi strongman emerging from a divided and unstable Iraq. Two Iraqi heads of state prior to Saddam (King Ghazi and Brigadier Abdul Karim Qassim) claimed that Kuwait was a part of Iraq which needed to be restored to the homeland.<sup>243</sup> King Ghazi, who ruled Iraq as a restless British client in the late 1930s, demanded Kuwait's annexation in public statements and attempted to incite Kuwaitis against their local leaders while the country was still a British protectorate.<sup>244</sup> Even more seriously, Brigadier Qassim publicly threatened to invade Kuwait and restore it to the Iraqi homeland by military force after the British granted the country independence in 1961. Qassim's threats prompted British and later Arab League forces to be stationed in Kuwait to deter an Iraqi invasion.<sup>245</sup> The belief that Iraqi designs on Kuwait will not end with Saddam is therefore not surprising and may well be correct.

In the past, Kuwait at times has viewed a rough balance of power between Iraq and Iran as having some positive aspects, although this view changed in 1991. Iraq invaded Kuwait at a time when Iran had been weakened severely by the Iran-Iraq war and was

not in a position to respond to the crisis. A weakened Iran thus helped to empower a strong and aggressive Iraq. Nevertheless, when Iraq received an unexpectedly strong response from the United States, Baghdad quickly renegotiated its relationship with Iran, making a variety of territorial and other concessions to Tehran in order to redeploy its troops to face potential combat against the United States and its allies. The 1991 war left Saddam severely crippled, but he was still considered Kuwait's deadliest enemy until his ouster in 2003.

In the aftermath of Saddam's ouster, Iran has emerged as the strongest of the Gulf regional powers. Unfortunately, the political leadership in Tehran has become more extreme over the last few years with the marginalization of the Iranian reform movement and the elevation of additional hardliners such as Iranian President Amadinejad. Additionally, Kuwait has a troubling history with Iran that was set aside in recent years due to the more serious threat of Saddam Hussein. During the Iran-Iraq war, Kuwait was threatened repeatedly by the Tehran government for its support of Iraq, and Iranian-supported terrorist activities in Kuwait emerged as a serious problem. On one occasion, the Kuwaiti emir was targeted in an unsuccessful assassination attempt that the Kuwaitis believe was Iranian supported.<sup>246</sup> In some instances, the Iranian Air Force "mistakenly" bombed targets in Kuwait.<sup>247</sup> Kuwaiti problems with Iraq, therefore, have not made them comfortable with a resurgent Iran, and this concern provides additional support for the policy of U.S. troops remaining with the country.

The U.S. military currently maintains troops scattered throughout around 10 bases in Kuwait, the most important of which are Camp Buehring and Camp Arifjan. Previously the centerpiece of the U.S.

presence in Kuwait was Camp Doha, but this facility had been closed almost completely by early 2006, with the Camp Doha operations transferred to other bases in Kuwait that are farther away from civilian population centers.<sup>248</sup> Camp Doha was never envisioned to be a permanent base, and the movement to Camp Arifjan constitutes an effort to further lower the profile of U.S. troops in Kuwait. Some Kuwaitis have previously expressed concern that the U.S. military presence is exceptionally visible to the local citizenry, unlike during the early 1960s when British troops in Kuwait appeared virtually invisible. Both the U.S. and Kuwaiti governments seek to limit the U.S. public profile in the country as a way of minimizing any strengthening of the political opposition to their presence.

On the domestic front, Kuwait is a stable country which handled a contentious succession crisis in 2006 with dignity and consensus.<sup>249</sup> Varying degrees of political freedom also have existed throughout Kuwaiti post-independence history. The Kuwaiti parliament was created by the 1962 Constitution, and the Parliament operated sporadically from 1963 to 1990 and almost continuously from 1992 on. Kuwait also has a strong reformist movement which is well-represented in the Parliament. Upon occasion, the Parliament can be quite assertive in confronting the monarchy.<sup>250</sup> Kuwait also has an ongoing reform movement and granted women the right to vote in 2005.

The Kuwaiti population is about 25-30 percent Shi'ite, and this group traditionally has been outside of the governmental power structure. In recent years, Kuwaiti Shi'ites have suffered discrimination and remain outside of the inner circles of power, but the Kuwaiti government also has taken a number of steps to integrate them more fully into the political life of the



state and to give them a stake in the future of the Kuwaiti political entity.<sup>251</sup> Kuwaiti policies toward their Shi'ites often appear particularly enlightened when compared to those of Saudi Arabia and, to some extent, Bahrain.<sup>252</sup> A key moment of Shi'ite choice was the aftermath of the 1990 Iraqi invasion when Kuwaiti Shi'ites formed an important part of the underground resistance to the Iraqi occupation, establishing themselves among the foremost Kuwaiti nationalists.<sup>253</sup>

A small number of Kuwaitis and noncitizen residents of Kuwait disapprove of that country's role as a springboard for the 2003 invasion and object to the continuing presence of 25,000 U.S. troops in Kuwait.<sup>254</sup> Most of these oppositionists appear to be Islamists, and there is a fringe of violent radicals. Al Qa'ida has a few Kuwaitis, and a former al Qa'ida spokesman, Suleiman Abu al Ghaith, was a Kuwaiti who lost his citizenship in 2001.<sup>255</sup> Other members of al Qa'ida appear to have grown up in Kuwait as the children of foreign workers, including the operational mastermind of the 9/11 attacks, Khaled Sheikh Mohammad, and his nephew, Ramzi Yousef, one of the planners of the first World Trade Center attack in 1993.<sup>256</sup> Both of these individuals are Pakistani citizens. There also have been shoot-outs between the police and the armed Islamic extremists within Kuwait.<sup>257</sup> One of the most important of these confrontations was the "Peninsula Lions" incident of January 2005. This episode involved a 3-day gun battle between Kuwaiti police and antigovernment radicals, often identified as associates of al-Qa'ida. Four policemen and two civilian bystanders were killed in this battle, along with eight of the terrorists. Ten policemen also were wounded in the clash which was unprecedented in Kuwaiti history. Six of the terrorists captured in this attack were sentenced to death by

hanging in December 2005. Twenty-two others were given prison sentences ranging from 4 months to 15 years.<sup>258</sup> Thus while terrorist problems within Kuwait currently are manageable, the Kuwaiti government also clearly needs continuing U.S. counterterrorism support.

### **Bahrain.**

Bahrain is a small nation composed of a 36-island archipelago, with around 700,000 citizens and residents. The four main islands are joined by causeways, and include about 95 percent of Bahrain's total land area. Like a variety of other Gulf Arab states, Bahrain did not become independent from Great Britain until 1971. The Khalifa ruling family which assumed power upon the departure of British forces has been in place as Bahrain's national leadership for 2 centuries.<sup>259</sup> Although the ruling family is Sunni Muslim, around 70 percent of the citizens of Bahrain are Shi'ites. There are around 235,000 foreign workers, many of whom come from South Asia. Bahrain is not a wealthy state, and most of its oil reserves already have been depleted.

While none of the Gulf Arab states have a serious capacity for self-defense, Bahrain is the smallest of the GCC countries and almost certainly the most helpless. Manama's limited financial resources also make large-scale military purchases impossible, and the Bahraini government may have concerns about expanding the military in ways which significantly increase the representation of Shi'ites in the army. Currently, the army includes a number of foreign nationals including Pakistanis, Jordanians, Syrians, and Yemenis.<sup>260</sup> This situation seems to leave foreign alliances as the only serious way of approaching external defense. Thus, as

Bahrain began to loosen its relationship with London, the need for friendly relations with the United States became increasingly important.

The U.S. Naval presence in Bahrain has existed continuously since 1949 and thus pre-dates Bahraini independence.<sup>261</sup> On October 27, 1991, the U.S.-Bahraini relationship was strengthened and given greater depth with the signing of a new military cooperation agreement providing for port facilities and joint military exercises.<sup>262</sup> Bahrain is the headquarters for the U.S. Fifth Fleet (also known as the Naval Support Activity, Bahrain) and NAVCENT, the naval component of the U.S. Central Command. Bahrain provided major basing and support facilities on a number of occasions, including the "tanker war" with Iran in the late 1980s, the 1991 Gulf War, and the 2003 invasion of Iraq.<sup>263</sup> Bahrain also sent a small symbolic force to participate in Operation DESERT SHIELD and Operation DESERT STORM in 1990-91.<sup>264</sup> Dredging is taking place in Manama Harbor to allow it to more easily accommodate warships. On March 25, 2002, President Bush designated Bahrain as a "major non-NATO U.S. ally."<sup>265</sup>

Bahrain is within 8 minutes flying time from Iran, and concerns about Iran are central to Manama's assessments of possible dangers to its independence and security. Iran, under the rule of the last shah, raised claims to sovereignty over Bahrain as the UK moved increasingly close to granting its independence.<sup>266</sup> The shah eventually recognized Bahrain's forthcoming independence in 1970, but considerable residual fear existed that Tehran would reassert itself if it could do so without a substantial regional or international uproar.<sup>267</sup> Bahrain was an Iranian possession between 1602 and 1783.

The overthrow of Iran's last shah in 1979 did not lead to better Bahraini-Iranian relations, and instead caused Manama's relations with Tehran to fall to a new low due to the assertiveness of the Iranian revolutionaries. In the exuberance of the young revolution, leading spokesmen of the Islamic Republic briefly reasserted claim to Bahrain, although these claims received little rhetorical follow-up and seemed to fade relatively quickly.<sup>268</sup> More seriously, in December 1981, 73 Bahrainis were arrested and accused of planning a coup against the Bahraini government. They also were charged with being members of the Tehran-based Islamic Front for the Liberation of Bahrain and coordinating their subversive actions with Tehran.<sup>269</sup> Iran vehemently denied involvement in the effort to overthrow the government.<sup>270</sup> While Iran and Bahrain were later able to normalize their relations, this is a troubling history.

Some journalistic reports suggest that Iran directed strong pressure at Bahrain to oppose publicly the 2003 U.S. intervention in Iraq.<sup>271</sup> Thus, it is hardly surprising that in August 2002, the king of Bahrain issued a joint statement with Iran's leadership opposing any "unilateral" military strike against Iraq.<sup>272</sup> While Tehran had little use for the Saddam Hussein regime, its leaders were concerned that the United States, by defeating Saddam, could encircle Iran with pro-American regimes from Afghanistan to Iraq, thus threatening the Islamic Republic. Bahraini leaders apparently felt the need to show at least cosmetic solidarity with Iran over this issue. In a related effort, Manama subsequently made a last-minute asylum offer to Saddam Hussein in what it presented as an effort to avoid war while also ending the Saddam regime. This offer may not have been particularly serious and was only made after

Saddam has stated unequivocally that he would rather die than go into exile.<sup>273</sup> While the Bahrainis remain willing to make these sorts of gestures, they almost certainly would never trust Iran to the extent of failing to maintain strong security ties with the United States or another outside power.

The caution noted above can be seen in at least one of Bahrain's other regional relationships, the one with Saudi Arabia. Bahrain, unlike Qatar, does not have the luxury of asserting a great deal of independence from Saudi Arabia, when the larger nation wishes to assert its regional clout. Despite their geographical proximity, Bahrain and Qatar have overwhelming differences in their political and economic situations. While Qatar is a wealthy country that is getting wealthier, Bahrain, as noted, has much more limited resources. Moreover, Bahrain's economic problems have made it somewhat dependent upon Saudi Arabia, which provides support to Manama in several important ways. One of these involves the King Fahd causeway (opened in 1986) which connects Bahrain to Saudi Arabia and is used for over 2,300,000 car trips per year.<sup>274</sup> A variety of Saudi tourists come to Bahrain via the causeway, and they often spend significant amounts of money there. Additionally, Saudi Arabia has granted Bahrain the right to exploit the Abu Safa offshore oil field. Previously the two countries shared the revenues of this resource.<sup>275</sup> While Bahrain clearly is grateful for Saudi support, a relationship with the United States is a valuable counterweight to complete Saudi domination of its much smaller neighbor.

Bahrain is a moderately stable nation which, at times, displays some pluralistic tendencies, although substantial problems exist over issues such as Shi'ite representation in parliament. Reform also is an up

and down process in Bahrain, with some observers suggesting Manama is unable to make more than cosmetic efforts to more fully enfranchise Shi'ites.<sup>276</sup> Bahrain, unlike the other small Gulf Arab states, has a substantial Shi'ite majority (around 70 percent of the population), and granting them true equality could lead to a divided government with a Sunni monarchy and Shi'ite-controlled parliament. Such a prospect also is of concern to Bahrain's privileged Sunni Arabs, most of whom have grown comfortable with a system that allows them to dominate the majority Shi'ites. The government further is concerned about deepening sectarian violence in Iraq aggravating sectarian problems in Bahrain. During the 1990s, there was considerable sectarian strife in Bahrain after Shi'ites began a protest campaign for greater political rights in late 1994. This campaign led to disturbances and a tough government crackdown.<sup>277</sup> By 1999, the cycle of anti-regime unrest and massive government repression seemed to have concluded, and some hopes existed for the peaceful expansion of Shi'ite rights.

Bahrain's political culture also allows demonstrations which are usually small and sometimes at odds with each other. Anti-Israeli demonstrations occur that occasionally involve speeches and slogans opposing the continued U.S. military presence in Bahrain.<sup>278</sup> This is probably an effort to express anger over various Israeli actions rather than a serious call to change the U.S.-Bahraini relationship in any fundamental way. Bahraini officials have urged people to limit their criticism and not to burn the U.S. flag during protests because they fear that such actions would harm their relations with the United States.<sup>279</sup> Some Bahraini protestors even have considered waving the U.S. flag at their demonstrations as part of a call for democracy,

but they ultimately rejected doing so because this appeared to invite foreign intervention in a domestic dispute.<sup>280</sup> Additionally, since Bahrain is not a rich country, issues of the equitable sharing of U.S. rental fees for the use of Bahraini port and basing facilities is an ongoing political issue.

Bahrain's political turmoil has on occasion affected U.S. military operations there. In July 2004, the U.S. Department of Defense approved the temporary relocation of family members and nonemergency personnel from Bahrain.<sup>281</sup> This decision was made because of concerns about Sunni Muslim terrorists rather than Shi'ite unrest. The 2004 decision to evacuate U.S. dependents nevertheless mortified the Bahraini leadership. Bahraini Defense Minister Bin Hamad, after careful consultation with U.S. officials, stated that the withdrawal was limited to families and purely a "precautionary measure" in response to al Qa'ida threats. He maintained that "Bahrain is safe. We are not lax and will not be lax with terror. Our forces are capable of deterring every danger."<sup>282</sup> In October 2005 outgoing Fifth Fleet commander Rear Admiral David Nichols stated that Bahrain would remain a permanent home for the Fifth Fleet, and that reports it would be moved to Qatar were baseless.<sup>283</sup> The nonviolent Bahraini opposition usually does not raise the basing issue as a point of disagreement with the government, and the presence of U.S. military forces also may help the two sides remain peaceful in their disagreement, since unrest and bloodshed could provoke another temporary relocation order or, in extreme circumstances, could cause NAVCENT to consider relocating its headquarters.

## Oman.

Oman maintains a highly strategic position in the Gulf region. The country has a long history of cooperation with the United States and United Kingdom, although it seeks to maintain these ties in an inconspicuous way. Additionally, Oman, with a territory the size of Kansas and around 3 million residents, is somewhat larger than some of the other Gulf states. Around 600,000 of its residents are noncitizen foreign nationals.<sup>284</sup> Oman produces limited amounts of oil, but it also is one of the less prosperous members of the GCC. Oman also has a bit more military muscle than most of the Arab Gulf states (at least regarding size), with 41,000 active duty personnel in its armed forces, including 25,000 in the army.

Oman is a moderate Arab country with long history of concern about revolutionary Iran. Muscat previously had maintained extremely close relations with the Shah of Iran, who provided some military forces to assist the Omanis in putting down a long and difficult rebellion in their province of Dhofar.<sup>285</sup> This rebellion began in 1962 and ended in 1975 after years of difficult fighting. In the aftermath of the Iranian revolution, the Iranian and Omani navies shadowed each other, and the Iranians violated Omani territorial waters.<sup>286</sup> Oman has been discretely supportive of the Arab-Israeli peace process and was one of the few Arab nations to support Egyptian President Sadat's 1977 trip to Jerusalem to address the Israeli Knesset.

In 2000, Oman renewed its 10-year defense agreement with the United States, which it initially accepted in 1979. This agreement allows the U.S. military to base aircraft at three Omani air bases, Seeb, Masirah Island, and Thumrait. The agreement also



allows the United States to preposition military equipment.<sup>287</sup> In 2003 the U.S. presence in Oman fell to around 3,750 from about 4,300 during Operation ENDURING FREEDOM in 2002. By 2006, there were only around 26 U.S. personnel stationed in Oman, indicating that Omani facilities are no longer being used to support operations in Afghanistan or Iraq. Most of the U.S. military personnel stationed in Oman were members of the Air Force.<sup>288</sup> U.S. aircraft stationed there during the high point of hostilities included B-1 bombers and C-130 transport aircraft. There has been little apparent public opposition to the U.S. presence in Oman during 2002-03 when military operations from that country were at their high point.

The United States has continued to maintain extensive prepositioning facilities on the Omani island of Masirah.<sup>289</sup> Oman also appears stable, and the current sultan has been in power since 1970. There is no designated successor to the sultan in Oman, although Sultan Qaboos has written his preference in a letter to be opened after his death if the sultanate's notables cannot agree on a successor.

## CONCLUSIONS

Relations between the United States and the Arab World were at a particularly low level at the time this report was written due to ongoing differences over the Iraq war, the war on terrorism, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict, and the aftermath of a crisis in Lebanon. Yet, the United States has highly significant interests and important allies in the region which cannot be neglected. The challenge for the United States remains to support its allies and its national interests without adding to its already serious difficulties in the region

through actions which inadvertently support the growth of radicalism in the area. The following policy recommendations are offered with these concerns in mind.

**1. The United States should treat basing rights and democratization as issues that must be balanced and rationalized.** This will not be easy in all cases. Sometimes incomplete and distorted democracy may have to be acknowledged as better than instability and violence. New and more virulent forms of repressive regimes sometimes result from the overthrow of paternalist monarchies. There is no way for the United States to maintain bases in the Arab world while totally insulating itself from the political dynamics of the region. Moreover, the United States does itself and its allies no favors by allowing the issue of basing rights to silence it on human rights and democratization.

**2. The United States should not seek long-term military facilities in Iraq, unless strongly implored by a wide spectrum of the Iraqi leadership to do so. The United States should conduct future strategic planning on the assumption that U.S. bases in Iraq will be turned over to the Iraqis in the medium-term future.** Large and important Arab states seeking prestige and political leadership in the Arab World find these bases to be a political burden. The United States should seek military cooperation with any future Iraqi government that is stable, inclusive of its citizenry, and friendly in ways that do not involve permanent bases. Nor is it clear what tactical advantage they would provide, given the large number of other Gulf states willing to allow U.S. basing rights currently. The Egyptian, Jordanian, and now Saudi Arabian examples of close security cooperation with the United States without permanent basing rights could be particularly

useful to draw upon should Iraq emerge as a U.S. security partner. Additionally, in either a worst or best case scenario, U.S. forces will have to evacuate Iraqi bases. In a best case scenario, a self-confident and united Iraq is expected to emerge, but this type of nation will almost certainly return to its historic patterns of seeking Arab leadership and displaying independence from all foreign states. In a worst case scenario, civil unrest in Iraq will spin out of control, leaving an environment in which the United States can no longer contain unrestrained Iraqi violence and will almost certainly choose to withdraw. In a case of low level civil unrest or ongoing insurgency, the Iraqis would have difficulty explaining a semi-permanent U.S. presence to their public or the wider Arab World unless the alternative was seen as anarchy.

**3. The United States must make a serious effort to heal the rift between itself and the Arab World by privately and publicly treating friendly Arab states as our security partners and not our clients.** That will involve consulting them on a wide array of military and nonmilitary issues throughout the region. There also is a need to treat states with respect and courtesy, which is important in the Arab World. U.S. officials traveling to Iraq, for example, could help U.S.-Kuwaiti relations if they used Kuwait as something more than a site to refuel their aircraft. Stopping even for a few hours to consult with Kuwaiti allies could avoid the stigma of a great power that refuses to take smaller nations seriously.

**4. The United States now has what amounts to a special relationship with Qatar that needs to be continuously nurtured despite differences over Al Jazeera satellite television.** Qatar was willing to expand its military relationship with the United States

at a point when doing so was and remains enormously unpopular in the wider Arab World. It also has relatively friendly relations with Israel, and this situation, at least, suggests that it will be circumspect about allowing the Israeli-Palestinian problem to overwhelm other interests. Moreover, the Qatari emphasis on addressing Palestinian problems through engagement with Israel ultimately may help the Peace Process and the Palestinians. The factors that unite the United States and Qatar therefore seem fundamental, and the issues dividing them seem weak. The military value each side has to the other is enormous. Differences over al Jazeera can continue to be discussed usefully but must not be allowed to poison the relationship.

**5. The leadership of the United States must make a strong effort to understand how its actions may be placed into the context of Middle Eastern history.** The nations of the Arab World can not be dealt with effectively without understanding the long history of interaction between the Arab World and the West, including periods of substantial Western domination. This means that our good intentions will not always be taken for granted, and any sign of Western hypocrisy will be identified rapidly. The United States must take differences between itself and the Arab World over policy as serious matters for discussion. It must not view policy differences as emerging as a result of a failure of public relations. The United States needs to remain aware that Gulf politics cannot be isolated from the politics of the larger Arab World and Middle East.

**6. To the extent that both parties desire it, the United States needs to strengthen its military and counterterrorism relations with friendly Arab governments.** Terrorism will become either an increasing or decreasing problem, depending on a

variety of factors including what might happen in Iraq, and every effort must be made to defeat the terrorists. However flawed our current allies are, they are hugely better than terrorists such as Kuwait's Peninsula Lions or al Qa'ida of the Arabian Peninsula. Everything possible to help them in their struggles is worth consideration, and we must do nothing that impedes their efforts or suggests that we may be equivocating in our support for them in the face of enemies such as those noted above.

**7. The United States, and especially the U.S. military, needs to reduce and remove bureaucratic obstacles to bringing allied Arab officers to the United States to receive military training and education.** This is particularly the case with officers from highly strategic countries and countries that can fund the overseas education and training of their nationals. Anything that can be done to reduce the difficulty of Gulf officers coming to the United States for education and training is well worth consideration.

**8. The United States must recognize that small Gulf powers have good reasons to seek U.S. bases on their soil, but these states will also be reluctant to antagonize regional powers such as Iran.** While small, weak, and rich countries will never want to be left to the tender mercies of their larger Gulf neighbors, neither do they wish to antagonize them unnecessarily. Refusal to confront powerful neighbors in an open and public way is second nature to small and weak states and should not be viewed as a sign of waning commitment to a defense relationship with the United States. Rather, it is an effort not to insult a highly sensitive and dangerous neighbor. However pleasant such niceties appear, the leaderships of the Gulf Arab states do not trust Iran.

**9. The United States needs to avoid mistreating its allies needlessly as occurred as a result of the cancellation of the Dubai Ports World agreement with the United Arab Emirates.** A staggering amount of utterly inaccurate information was put forth during this controversy to a public that was almost completely unaware of the existence of the UAE, let alone the value of its friendship to the United States. White House efforts to address public concerns and explain the relationship were useful but ultimately were unsuccessful due to widespread lack of public understanding about both the value of the relationship with the UAE and the nonthreatening nature of the agreement with Dubai Ports World. Good allies must not be treated as expendable, since the United States might need their help at some future point. Continuing efforts to educate the public on these matters remain important. The efforts and courage of the U.S. administration in this matter should be lauded by those experts who understand this situation, even if they do not agree with the administration on other matters.

**10. The United States should continue to work with the Bahraini government to ensure a continued U.S. presence in that country. The United States also should continue to encourage ongoing Bahraini efforts at reform and a government that is inclusive of Shi'ites.** Should serious sectarian violence continue to escalate in Iraq, it might strongly affect the political situation in Bahrain. Yet, any U.S. withdrawal from Bahrain at a time of limited and containable civil unrest could be interpreted as a lack of confidence in the monarchy's ability to survive. U.S. friendship therefore could be viewed as fickle and only as valuable as the umbrella that works perfectly, except when it rains. Force protection analysts therefore must find creative

ways to protect U.S. service personnel in Bahrain, using approaches that do not undercut our allies, if this is possible. A full civil war in Bahrain, of course, would be a different situation, but one hopes that the Bahrainis would be wise enough to pull back from this alternative.

## ENDNOTES

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16. On this episode, see Reeva Spector Simon, *Iraq Between the Two World Wars: The Militarist Origins of Tyranny*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2004, chapter 6.

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